Wednesday, April 8, 2009 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 24 / No. 121 P10 inquirer.net

Meralco hikes rate: ₱54.55/ kWh this mo.

Job Watch: Gov't projects .5M new jobs in Mindanao ACROSS / A12

RP out of tax haven blacklist NEWS / A7

Biz Buzz: Tycoon banned from Wack Wack BUSINESS / B2

Presidential chopper, GMA aides missing

A PRESIDENTIAL CHOPPER WITH seven people on board, including two Cabinet undersecretaries and a senior military aide of President Macapagal-Arroyo, has been declared missing after taking off from Baguio City yesterday afternoon.

The Bell 412 helicopter took off at around 4:10 p.m. from the Loakan airport in Baguio City and was en route to Batangas when it went missing, Press Secretary Cerge Remonde said.

Among those on board the helicopter were Jose Capadocia, presidential secretary for operations; Macleo

PRESIDENTIAL A12

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

By Arny R. Barua

THIS, NO DOUBT, WILL CAUSE consumers' temperature to rise.

For rising temperatures have pushed power consumption and rates up, Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), the country's biggest distributor of electricity, said yesterday.

Meralco's customers can expect their April electricity bills to increase by ₱4.55 centavos per kilowatt-hour, as the basic generation charge has risen to

MERALCO B4

Unsafe buildings main killers in Italy quake

L'AQUILA, ITALY—THE EARTHQUAKE that devastated this medieval town would likely have caused only limited damage in Japan and other affluent countries in quake-prone regions, but a variety of factors conspires to make Italy particularly vulnerable, experts said.

While L'Aquila sits about a kilometer from the epicenter of Monday's

UNSAFE A13

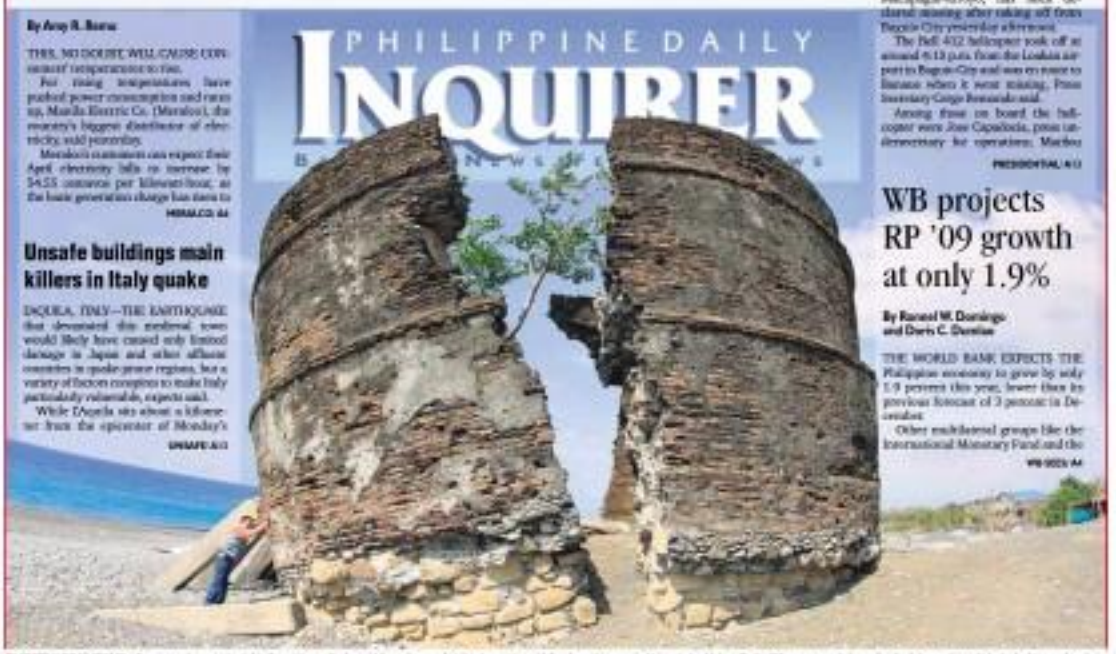
WB projects RP '09 growth at only 1.9%

By Ranel W. Domingo and Doris C. Dumlao

THE WORLD BANK EXPECTS THE Philippine economy to grow by only 1.9 percent this year, lower than its previous forecast of 3 percent in December.

Other multilateral groups like the International Monetary Fund and the

WB 2009 A4



GHOSTLY GRANDEUR Seawater has cracked this Spanish-era 'baluarte' (watchtower) right down the middle along the coast of Luna in La Union. Built 400 years ago, it is made of adobe and coral blocks held together by lime and eggwhites. A cultural group is working for the restoration of other watchtowers in La Union headed by former Sta Fernanda City Mayor Mary Jane Ortega. (Story on Page A11.)

Puno moral force in place

Eight-man group has met twice in 3 weeks

By Norman Bordadora

A MORAL FORCE MOVEMENT envisioned by Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato Puno has taken shape and is set to come up with a criteria on who voters should elect in the 2010 balloting—from president down to the local levels.

Court spokesperson Jose Midas Marquez said Puno had chosen highly respected individuals to make up the movement's core group and has attended its two meetings over the past three weeks.

The group is composed of Henrietta De Villa, chair of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting; Msgr. Gerardo Santos, executive secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines Episcopal Commission; and Mario Prieto, chair of the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

Also in the group are Methodist Bish-

PUNO A11

CHILDREN from Barangay Guadalupe Nuevo in Makati City learn to sing the "Pasyon" which is the narration of the agony, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, its chanting rising to a crescendo around the country as the Holy Week deepens. MIGUEL DE BOSCH

3 foreigners targeted in Jolo kidnap

By Julie Alipala in Zamboanga City and TJ Burgonio and Michael Lim Ubac in Manila

GOVERNMENT TROOPS HAVE TARgeted a Malaysian and two Indonesian members of the al Qaeda-linked Jemaah Islamiyah in a crackdown on some 100 members and supporters of the Abu Sayyaf kidnappers holding two Red Cross workers, officials said yesterday.

Lt. Gen. Nelson Allaga, Western Mindanao Command chief, identified the Indonesians as Umar Patek and

3 FOREIGNERS A6

GMA also to blame for killings, says rights group

By Nikko Dizon

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO is also to blame for the unabated vigilante-style killings of perceived party criminals in Davao City because of her alliance with Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, the New York-based Human Rights Watch said yesterday.

"It is a problem that in a sense has gone all the way up to the President because she, too, by refusing to accept Duterte's resignation as overseer of the police, has allowed a man to stay in power who is denying the existence of a grave problem," Human Rights Watch executive director Kenneth Roth told the Inquirer Monday.

At a press conference yesterday, Human Rights Watch presented a report titled "A Place You Can Die Any Time: Death Squad Killings in Mindanao," which Roth said provided the "most detailed account" yet on the existence of the Davao death squads.

Duterte has denied the existence of the so-called Davao Death Squad.

Director General Jesus Verzosa, head of the Philippine National Police, also denied allegations that the killings had the blessing of authorities.

GMA ALSO A6

RP Reds acclaim Nokor rocket launch

NORTH KOREA YESTERDAY WON BACKing for its weekend rocket launch from communist guerrillas in the Philippines who have been waging a decades-old Maoist insurgency.

The Communist Party of the Philip-

RP REDS A11

'Jesus birds' walk on waters of Candaba

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—IT could well be a reminder of Holy Week.

Frequent sightings of jacanas, called "Sabar-kabar" by locals but

JESUS A6

AUDITUS BRIDGE This jacana seems to be walking on water as it treks from one levee to the next. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Rarest shark caught, butchered in Donsol

By Juan Escandor Jr.
in Southern Luzon
and Alcuin Papa
in Manila

LEGAZPI CITY—A MEGAmouth shark, one of the world's most elusive species, was caught and butchered by fishermen near Donsol, Sorsogon and prepared as a dish called "tinuwom," the environmental group World-wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

RAREST A4

SO ELUSIVE Megamouth, 4 meters wide, weighing 500 kilos, is dead in a trawlers' net. It is named for its outer-wide mouth. AFP

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

EZ2+ 21 19 3 31

SUERTRES+ 4 9 1 8 1 0 9 1 5

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6/42 LUZ/VIS/MIN 1 5 6 7 14 35 P8,048,982.60

SUPERLOTTO 6/49 6 9 12 28 34 42 P63,004,154.40

2 firms added in Legacy case

By Norman Bordadora

THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION included two realty companies in its complaint against the owner of the failed Legacy insurance company and over a dozen foreclosed rural banks, Cabo delos Angeles, his relatives and associates.

In separate complaints filed with the Department of Justice, the SEC included Conventional Realty Corp. and Shining Armour Property Inc., among the companies allegedly used by Delos Angeles to defraud investors of millions of pesos.

"Taken as a whole, it appears [that the two companies] acted as the business conduit of Legacy Consolidated Plans Inc., and the two other companies [implied a conscious and intentional design to do a wrongful act]."

The SEC said that the two companies, its issuing post-dated checks to Legacy investors, "served as the final pieces of the puzzle to complete the elaborate and fraudulent scheme" of Legacy Consolidated Plans Inc."

Common respondents in the cases against Conventional and Shining Armour were Delos Angeles, his wife Ma. Concepcion, son Nicolo Martin, staffers Purita and Veronica delos Angeles.

Respondents

The other respondents in the case against Conventional Realty were Roy Hilario and lawyer Clotaire V. Antonio Cruz-Gimpin. SEC also listed unidentified "John and Jane Does."

In the case against Shining Armour Property, the other respondents were Simeona Panotes and Reychell Baldovino as well as John and Jane Does.

The SEC said that while investments were made in Legacy, the post-dated checks that would supposedly pay for the interim coins from the two real estate firms.

The investment model eventually collapsed leading to the non-payment of the promised high yield of returns.

The state-looking directors of Legacy and the two realty firms also indicated that the plan was ready to make the two firms a business conduit for Legacy, the SEC said.

'COOL' DOGS
Two pet dogs left behind in a boat while its owner takes a dip in Manila Bay may feel the heat, but they could be wiser. Although swimmers have been banned from wading off in the polluted waters of the Bay, many ignore the warning. MANUEL ROMULO

Only US pistachios banned—BFAD

By Dona Pazdigan

NOT ALL PISTACHIO NUTS and products containing pistachios are being recalled from stores and supermarkets, the head of the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) has clarified.

BFAD Director Leticia Cariño said they have no for only banned pistachios imported from the United States, specifically those from the California-based company Setton Pistachio of Terra Bella Inc., whose pistachios were found to have been contaminated with Salmonella.

According to Cariño, other pistachio and products with pistachio like ice cream that are available locally could have roasted shelled pistachios from Spain, Turkey and or even Thailand. The BFAD said the pistachio products imported from countries other than the US have yet to be tested for Salmonella contamination.

Warning

The agency warned consumers to "postpone eating shelled pistachio-containing products until information becomes available about whether the products may be affected."

"For the sake of public safety we advise the public to avoid any pistachio products in general. Just like in the US, it's a limiter to prevention," Cariño said.

"We're still getting samples of those [other pistachio products] and checking them in our own laboratories," she added.

With less than 300 personnel, the food safety regulatory agency does not have the manpower to scour all the markets nationwide to collect samples of available pistachio products and then test them immediately for Salmonella.

That is why said Cariñoso, they have directed their retail outlet to all registered pistachio importers, who have been asked to report if they have sourced their pistachios from Setton and to inform their distributors to take their products off the store shelves.

"Our small order is directed as importers who got their pistachios from Setton. Since the importers know where they have sold the pistachios, they should tell those distributors to recall their products," Cariñoso said.

Jail term for former DOTC official

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE SANDIGANBAYAN, THE country's antigraft court, has sentenced a former regional assistant director of the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) to up to 10 years in prison for requesting and receiving P50,000 from a businessman some seven years ago.

The case stemmed from the complaint of Nirvana Aldabao who accused former assistant director Roberto Fernando Jr. of the DOTC office in the Cordillera Autonomous Region of receiving P50,000 from him, in exchange for granting him a franchise for his passenger van.

There is proof beyond a reasonable doubt that the accused requested and received from Aldabao some pecuniary benefit in consideration of the help given him," First Division Presiding Judge Alexander Gesmundo said in his decision.

Aldabao told the court that a pagong driver had accompanied him in February 2002 to Fernando's office in Baguio City where the DOTC official had told him he was selling the franchise for P65,000.

Aldabao said he gave Fernando a P50,000 down payment and a postdated check, Ricardo Padilla, another P5,000. In April 2002, Aldabao said Fernando sent him a letter asking for other P10,000 more.

The prosecution presented the letter to the court. Fernando admitted he wrote the letter but claimed nothing the franchise. The DOTC official told the court he was just borrowing money from the complainant.

It sentenced Fernando to between six years and one month to 10 years and six months to prison and disqualified him from holding public office.

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37 *madaris* to get aid from DepEd

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DepEd) has allotted P19.2 million for selected students in Muslim schools in Mindanao to push peace and development efforts in the south through education, Education Secretary Jesli Lapus said yesterday.

The team readied action to the plural form of madrasah, the Arabic word for school, whether religious or secular.

Lapus said 37 private madaris qualified for financial assistance from DepEd, benefiting 1,834 pupils at the cost of P5,000 for each student adding that his department was committed to providing quality education to all children irrespective of their color, religion or culture.

The schools that would get assistance include 27 from 800-MM, which includes the Division of Marawi City, Lanao del Sur I and II, Shariff Kabunsuan, Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao and Tawi-Tawi, eight from Region XII (Cotabato City and General Santos City), and two from Region XI (Davao City).

"Mainstreaming the standard curriculum in Madrasah Education in the basic education system" was one of DepEd's priority programs, said the DepEd official. "Apart from the lessons regularly taught in madaris, our Muslim brothers and sisters will adopt the standard curriculum to give them equal chances in employment opportunities."

The education secretary added that the Revised Curriculum for elementary public schools and the Standard Curriculum for Private Madrasah were mechanisms "of teaching the unteached and providing education that is meaningful, relevant and culture-sensitive for Muslim children."

The Standard Curriculum for Madrasah Education is integrates basic subjects with religious subjects such as Qur'an (the Muslim holy book), Aqeedah (the fundamentals of Islamic creed), Hajeh/Islamic jurisprudence), Seerah (the life of the Prophet Muhammad) and the Hadith (or the oral traditions relating to words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad).

Lapus noted that through this curriculum, the Filipino national identity is promoted even as Muslim cultural heritage is preserved.

Right of reply bill's fate depends on caucus

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE FATE OF THE RIGHT OF REply bill will be decided in a caucus of the House of Representatives to be held shortly after members return next week.

A survey conducted at the House showed that the majority of congressmen approved of the bill, according to its principal author, Bataan Rep. Herminia Ramiro Roman.

The congressmen said a survey conducted two weeks before the House went on recess on March 6 showed that 87 of the colleagues agreed with the bill, 11 disagreed while 12 were undecided.

But he said the final decision would come in the closed-door caucus. They may have changed by minds by then, he noted.

Pastorelo also said he would inhibit himself from voting during the meeting and would leave it to his fellow lawmakers to decide whether the bill should be subjected to further debates or shelved altogether.

"We will have a closed door caucus to ascertain the body and the assembly seems to take it up again or not," he said, adding that he would abide by whatever the majority decides.

He also disclosed that there was "some pressure" for the House to pass the bill, but refused to say the source of the "pressure."

Earlier, Speaker Prospero Nograles asked media organizations to reconsider their hard opposition to the bill and to submit proposals on how lawmakers could come up with a proposed law acceptable and fair to all parties.

The right of reply bill seeks to require media organizations to publish the responses of parties who feel they had been maligned in reports.

Media organizations that refuse to do so would face sanctions.

The proposed law has been criticized by media practitioners who view it as an intrusion on the Constitution-ally protected provisions on press freedom, saying it would threaten reporters who fail to publish.

The Senate has long passed a right of reply bill, with senators voting 21-0 in favor of the proposed legislation.

In the wake of nationwide protests, several senators believed to favor the provision on the bill have withdrew their support for the bill.

The House version, that has been watered down in response to senate huffing criticism, has yet to be subjected to plenary debates.

A busy schedule awaits the House when it resumes sessions on April 21 as lawmakers are set to tackle Charter change by studying on a law removing the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, its latest extension expires in June.

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ENROLLMENT GOING ON...

PNB asked to get $35-M Marcos funds

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE PHILIPPINE National Bank (PNB) should tell Merrill Lynch to transfer the $35 million Marcos funds to the bank after the Sandiganbayan last week ordered their forfeiture in favor of the government, a ranking Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) official said.

PCGG Commissioner Ador Bautista said the PNB had entered into an agreement with the commission years ago that it would act as an "escrow agent" for Marcos funds recovered from listed banks and to release them only "for its job" in the case of the $35 million-peso account deposited with Merrill Lynch.

Escrow agent

"The PNB should be asking for the transfer of the assets because they're the escrow agent. As the escrow agent, they're under obligations to perform their function," Bautista said.

"The PNB is now talking with Merrill Lynch about it. There's no understanding," he added.

Bautista said the funds would be put in an escrow account with the PNB, "not with the Republic," until all the litigation concerning the money is finalized.

"It would depend on the Supreme. If they're going to appeal the Sandiganbayan decision. Now here's this ruling and, if it's unreversed, it should be followed," Bautista said.

He also said there was no need to ask permission from US courts for the PNB to get the funds and PNB can go directly to Merrill Lynch.

"There's no need for that. The US Supreme Court had said that a competent Philippine court would determine whether the assets were ill-gotten or not. That competent court is the Sandiganbayan and it said these funds were ill-gotten," Bautista said.

Claim dismissed

"Of course, it depends on Merrill Lynch if it would give the funds. But since the PNB would only be acting as an escrow agent, the money would be protected. All parties claiming the money would be protected," he said.

Bautista also dismissed former Akbayan party-list Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales' claim that the government was trying to "short-circuit" the legal process to get its hands on the Zurich account.

"I don't know if former Congresswoman Rosales is a lawyer but we make sure that whatever we do have valid support by legal," Bautista said.

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– Charee Pineda, 43

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– Patty Bautista, 40

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– Claudine Trido-Plata, 43

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WB expects RP 2009 growth at only 1.9%

From page A1

Asian development think place Philippine growth at 2.25 percent and 2.5 percent, respectively.

Those estimates are lower than the government's official forecast of 3.7-4.4 percent, which is likely to be scaled down.

American investment bank Merrill Lynch sees the Philippines as among the less risky Pacific countries chalking up a positive albeit slower growth this year given a major global economic downturn.

The World Bank's latest projection for the country's gross domestic product (GDP) is slightly higher than the 1.7 percent growth that the multilateral agency expects for the global economy this year, the first decline in terms of annual output since the Second World War.

GDP refers to the total output of goods made and services rendered within an economy in a given period.

Major risk

Jim Adams, World Bank vice president for the East Asia and Pacific, said in a statement that government action by the region must expand social protection efforts to cushion "very real human costs."

"In its lower half-yearly report called "East Asia and Pacific Update" that was released yesterday the World Bank said the effects of the global recession on remittances inflows posed a major risk to the Philippines.

Over the past eight years, remittances from overseas Filipino workers have been a major boost to domestic demand which, in turn, has been the most important growth driver for the local economy, according to the report.

Limited impact

The report expressed reservations about the government's stimulus package, whose impact on the economy in 2009 "is estimated to be limited ... despite (its) ambitious size."

With a price tag of P330 billion, the so-called Economic Resiliency Plan represents 4.1 percent of the country's GDP.

"A rapidly deteriorating tax effort is a key concern to undertaking a credible and unconfined fiscal easing in 2009," the report said.

Revenue shortfall

"While the 2009 budget envisages an overall deficit of 3 percent of GDP, revenue shortfall could undermine the government's spending plans aimed at protecting its poor and vulnerable citizens and boosting medium-term growth prospects," it said.

In Manila, World Bank country director Ifzal Ali said that government's response to the crisis included moves to boost the resilience of the financial sector, the sending up of the conditional cash transfer program, and measures to help returning overseas Filipino workers who have lost their jobs.

"These are timely and appropriate responses to the rapidly deteriorating external environment, probably the worst global economic and financial crisis in generations," Ali has said.

Plunging demand

Eric Le Borgne, a senior economist at the World Bank, noted that sectors like exports-oriented firms, especially semiconductor manufacturers, were facing a particularly challenging environment this year.

Semiconductors, which account for three-fifths of the country's exports, have reported declines in demand by as much as 60 percent in recent months.

Other industries facing similar challenges include garments, furniture, footwear, handicrafts, agribusiness, mining and property.

Financially sound

Despite the difficulties, companies listed on the stock market and banks have weathered the global economic and financial shocks well, Le Borgne said.

"The financial sector remains financially sound with capital adequacy ratio higher than required," he said.

The report said the Philippines, along with other developing countries in the region—could achieve high growth rates by tapping domestic demand, boosting competitiveness, penetrating new markets and becoming more attractive as a destination for foreign investment.

The report cited the Philippines and similarly situated countries like Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia for stepping up efforts "to cushion the impact of the full-blown global financial and economic crisis" on the poor.

Merrill Lynch noted that the fresh global stimulus approved by the world's moneylenders and limits under the G-20 group would support the Asian region's quest toward recovery, but it predicted that some sectors of its 11 monitored Asia-Pacific markets would shrink this year.

RP still posting growth

Based on a Merrill Lynch research chief, April 3, the Philippines was among the four economies still seen posting some growth this year.

The forecast was a GDP expansion of 3.1 percent, although weaker than the 4.6 percent growth posted last year.

The three other economies expected to escape contraction this year were Indonesia (3.6 percent), China (8 percent) and India (5.1 percent).

On the other hand, the economies of neighboring Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore could shrink. Their dismal economies were projected to contract by 3.3 percent, 1.5 percent and 0.5 percent, respectively this year.

The outlook is likewise bleak for Australia (-0.3 percent), Taiwan (-5.5 percent) and Korea (-3.6 percent).

'Jesus birds' walk on waters of floating vegetation in Candaba

From page A1

known as "Jesus birds" in other parts of the world, are drawing nature lovers to Candaba.

They have long thin feet and streamlined claws which enable them to walk with their weight distributed on water. Negotiating floating vegetation in shallow lakes and waterbanks is the reason they are known as Jesus birds, according to tropicalbirds.com.

Jacinto set also known as "Lotus birds" and "Lily cockers," according to animorph.com.

Mike Lu, president of the Wild Bird Club of the Philippines (WBCP), said the species sighted in Candaba are the pheasant-tailed jacanas (*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*). They are widespread in the country but can be easily seen at the Pelayo bird sanctuary in Barangay Dolia Sinauog and in the vicinity of the Food South Gas Complex to the Apalit side of the North Luzon Expressway, both in Pampanga.

Not migratory

"As they are a common sight in the Candaba Swamp, people assume they are migratory birds. They are actually resident birds. The pheasant-tailed jacanas can be found in other parts of the world such as India, Southeast Asia and Taiwan," Lu said in a phone interview yesterday.

Sightings of jacanas and other birds, such as the common moorhen and the barred rail near the gasoline station on the North Luzon Expressway (NLEx) prompted the jet ship's developer, G-Star Resorts and Development Corp., to work with the WBCP and the Society for the Conservation of the Philippine Wetlands Inc. to build a wetlands information center.

G-Star has set aside 200 square meters to build the center and has allotted 1.5 hectares for a boardwalk from which visitors can birdwatch. The facilities will be finished by the end of the year.

Launched on Sunday by Sen. Loren Legarda and Gov. Eddie Panlilio, the project supports environmental conservation efforts at the Candaba Swamp, a 58,000-hectare marshland on the boundaries of Bulacan, Pampanga and Nueva Ecija, according to Roger Quevedo, G-Star president.

41 species

In the Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) in January, the WBCP and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) counted 12,813 birds out of 41 species in Candaba. They included the pheasant-tailed jacana, the rare black-faced spoonbill and pied avocet in the Dolia Sinauog and Pacalaya portions of the Candaba Swamp, giving new records for the Philippines.

The AWC is an annual program coordinated by Wetlands International in the Netherlands, a global organization that monitors the status of wetlands and waterbird populations.

More of the birds were sighted in the 120-hectare Bulacan side of the swamp, which is managed by the Bulacan Provincial Government.

But the family of Candaba Mayor Jerry Pineda has not cultivated on provide a regular refuge for the birds.

The local government has banned hunting in the town.

The owner will allow visitors to view or learn more about the birds and their habitats, "proving that it is possible to enjoy nature without harming the environment," said G-Star's Quevedo.

Rarest shark caught, butchered in Donsol

From page A1

Philippines until yesterday.

Greg Yan, WWF media officer, said the megamouth (*Megachasma pelagios*) was caught in a crossfire set along with marshland off the eastern coast of Barcelona Island on March 30.

Recorded the 4-meter, 800-kilogram shark was immediately brought to the town Dalaguete for assessment. When WWF Donsol project manager Elmer Sua arrived, he identified the find as a megamouth shark.

Against Sua's advice, the fishermen carved up the megamouth and cooked it as tinuktok (dish most cooked in coconut milk and red pepper), a delicacy of the Bicol region.

The villagers reasoned they had caught the same shark several years ago which they also prepared and heaven.

No regulation

According to Yan, there is no regulation that protects the megamouth, although the Fisheries Administrative Order 208 provides that after documentation, the carcass of all endangered marine animals should be promptly buried.

According to the WWF, megamouth shark sightings are so rare, each find is given a number.

The shark caught off Manhate near Donsol is was given the name "megamouth #1" by the Florida Museum of Natural History (FMNH), Yan said.

First in Luzon

A total of eight megamouth sharks, a full fifth of all recorded encounters, had been caught in Philippine waters. Four were caught in Cagayan de Oro and one each in Negros, Iloilo and Cebu. Megamouth #8 was the first to have been caught in Luzon, Yan said.

It measured 4 meters long and weighed 800 kilograms, with facial scars that indicated it had been into a protracted struggle to survive until it was caught, butchered, cooked and eaten here by villagers.

Discovered in 1976

The megamouth, the world's rarest shark species, was discovered only in 1976 by the FMNH, the WWF said in a statement.

"It is a fairly recent scientific discovery with the first specimen caught only 33 years ago in Oahu, Hawaii ... It is so rare and different from other sharks that it necessitated the creation of an entirely new family and genus, prompting the scientific community to hail it as the 20th century's most significant marine find that rivals the discovery of coelacanth in 1938," according to the statement.

Together with the whale shark, it is one of only three filter-feeding shark species in the world. It is classified by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature as "data deficient" because so few have ever been studied, the WWF said.

Haven for sharks

The recent find the capture of the megamouth here proved that the waters between Donsol, Gubat and Matnog were not only a haven for whale sharks, dolphins and manta rays but also for the rarest shark of all.

For over a decade now, the WWF has worked closely with the municipality of Donsol to establish and refine the now famous community-based whale shark ecotourism project. The project has transformed the once sleepy town into one of the Bicol region's hottest revenue generators and prides itself as the whale shark capital of the world.

"The presence of two of the world's three filter feeding sharks near town special attention for the Donsol-Matnog region," explained Sua, who said in a current initiative funded by the WWF-Denmark and supported by the local government to establish whale shark migration routes and population through visits of the set photo identification and satellite tagging techniques.

Enormous size

According to the WWF, the megamouth shark is named after its big mouth that measures almost a meter wide and lined with a brilliant silver band on arrow gland. It is also considered a poor swimmer and is found throughout the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans.

The male shark has an average measurement of 4 meters, while the female grows to 5 meters and gives birth to live young ones.

With a report from AFP

'BICOL EXPRESS' Fishermen size up the megamouth, which they found beached near Donsol, Sorsogon, before butchering it up for a dish called "tinuktok," the Worldwide Fund for Nature Philippines says. The megamouth is the world's rarest shark species and was discovered only in 1976. Thirty years later only 48 megamouths have been encountered worldwide. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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17 Filipinos among victims of new sea hijack

MADRID—PIRATES SEIZED a British-owned ship and a Taiwan-registered fishing boat with at least 17 Filipino crew members off the Horn of Africa on Monday.

The new hijackings brought to five the number of vessels taken by pirates since last weekend, marking a jump in the number of hijackings in the waters off Somalia this year, international maritime officials said yesterday.

It brings the number of Filipinos overseas in the hands of Somali pirates to about 113.

The Taiwan-registered deep-sea fishing boat was operating in the Indian Ocean near the Seychelles when it was hijacked. Nothing more has been heard from the crew of 30 since Monday, the Taiwan Foreign ministry said in a statement yesterday.

On board the Win Fa No. 366 were two Taiwanese including the captain, five Chinese, six Indonesians and the 17 Filipinos, the ministry said.

The 32,000-ton British bulker Shakespeare Castle had separately been reported as taken on Monday.

"It is UK owned but operated by Bahian. The crew is mixed but we are not sure of their nationalities," Andrew Mwangura of the Mombasa-based East African Seafarers' Assistance Programme said on Monday.

Nikolai Apostolov, head of Bulgaria's Maritime Administration Agency said 16 Bulgarians were on board.

The ships seized last week and were identified as the French yacht "Tanit," a Yemeni fog and the Hanza Hamagar, a 20,000-tonne German container vessel with a 24-man crew. Five of the crew were Iranian. The nationalities of other crew members have not been ascertained.

Last March 28, Somali pirates released 12 Filipino seamen from the German-owned MV Longchamp, a gas tanker captured on Jan. 29.

The Department of Foreign Affairs said that left 96 Filipinos still being held captive in Somalia. (The figure does not include the 17 new captives.) Among the captive Filipinos are those working on the captured ships MT Stolt Strength (23 Filipinos on board), MV Safebanka (19), MV Titan (17), MT Filipinas (18) and MT Bow Asia (19).

Including those earlier released, a total of 323 Filipinos on board 31 ships have been taken captive by the pirates off the east African coast, according to DFA statistics. There are also three other Filipino seamen on an oil supply ship that was captured recently by Nigerian rebels.

Foreign navies have mulled warships to the area and produced the number of successful attacks. But there are still nearly daily attempts and the pirates have begun hunting further afield near the Seychelles archipelago.

In the first three months of 2009, only eight ships had been hijacked in the Gulf of Aden leading Europe to Asia and the eastern Indian Ocean off the Somali coast, according to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB).

The pirates typically use speed boats launched from "mother ships", which means they can sometimes evade foreign navies patrolling the busy shipping lanes. They then take captured vessels to remote coastal villages here in Somalia, where they await payment of ransom. Reuters, Jerome Aning

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'Hire vets' grandkids'—GMA

By TJ Burgonio

SAN SAMAL BOHAN—IN A small token for their "magnificent sacrifice," President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday ordered the employment of the grandchildren of poor World War II veterans.

Ms Arroyo said the grandchildren could be recruited into the P3-billion poverty mapping project of the Department of Social Welfare and Development which is offering 10,000 "short-term jobs."

"The DSWD needs an army of field engineers to assemble a concise picture of the poverty girds and coordinates of your households," she said at the 67th commemoration of "Araw ng Kagitingan" at the Mt. Samat Shrine here.

The poverty map, she stressed, would serve as "some sort of GPS locator" and guide the government in funneling aid, such as conditional cash transfer, and subsidized rice to poor families.

The country marks Araw ng Kagitingan every April 9 in honor of veterans who fought invading Japanese troops during World War II. There is talk on Manuel Thursday this year, the President decided to commemorate it on April 7.

In her speech, Ms Arroyo specifically ordered Ermita Cardona, Dolores andcemetary for veterans and reservist affairs, to identify the great veterans and their children.

"You have put up offices in areas where there are veterans in order to speed up processing of their claims. It should not be difficult to do the next step: find out which of these veterans belong to the poorest of the poor, so that they can be given additional benefits," she said.

Ms Arroyo said the grandchildren could also be recruited to to the recently launched Youth National Service Program, which offers 18 to 24-year-old youths a chance to continue to education and community service.

As this developed, the US government had approved the applicationsa of three PH. ipino war veterans in need of the $150-million lump sum payment recognizing their heroism in WWII.

Two of the veterans—Brig. Gen. Delfin Pecrata and Col. Rafael Estrella—yesterday received finished citations of approval during the ceremonies, sources told Inquirer.

The third veteran, 87-year-old Salvador Palaypay, was too sick to attend the rites. The former intelligence officer based in Bicol was suffering from mild pneumonia. With a report from Christian V. Esguerra

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3 foreigners targeted in Jolo kidnap

From page A1

Datimbang, who allegedly helped plan the 2002 Bali nightclub bombings in Indonesia that killed 202 people in Southeast Asia's worst terrorist attack.

The other 37 leader-involved in

Sr. Alex Sacay of Sipalay in Negros Occidental has "the same dream as Jolo" in that she wants to spend the rest of her life among the Tausugs in Mindanao, a Muslim-majority province in the country's south.

"They are all included. Actually all of them, suspected ASG members and their supporters," Año said of those in the list for being located in the islands and towns of Jolo province.

"The troops are there, they've secured the jungles for the Abu Sayyaf. We are after them," Año said.

Tuyac, Jose Renato Gerilla, a regional police spokesperson, confirmed Año's figure but did not say how many suspects were in the "legal offensive" target.

Another list with 50 names

Chief Supt. Alberto Bravo, chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in Western Mindanao, said CIDG also has a list and that it has 50 names, including the three policemen earlier "tasked" for questioning.

Bravo said tapping the CIDG list were Abdullah Pasad and Ibo Abu, whom raid teams in Datimbang found "very near the head man in the charge list," he said. He declined to reveal the other names for security reasons.

He said evidence against those people were provided by witnesses, including Mary Jean Lacaba, 27, an International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) worker who was freed Thursday after 77 days in Abu Sayyaf captivity.

Lacaba, along with Swiss Andreas Notter, 50, and Italian Eugenio Vagni, 62, was kidnapped Jan. 16 by armed men in Sumisip town in the Basilan province.

Strong evidence

Bravo said police have strong evidence against Pasad and the others, including the three policemen, when Sumisip chief Abu and two alleged kidnappers who were charged in the prosecutor's office of Zamboanga City Saturday with kidnapping for ransom.

In the wake of the crackdown, the Commission on Human Rights warned authorities against violating the rights of any suspect after Marisol Manuel, CHR Western Mindanao director, said authorities should ensure that they have enough evidence.

Ellego said the military can secure the CHR and the civilians' rights are upheld just for violations during the crackdown. "We are not doing it hulidorminister," he said.

Kidnappers' demands

The general also denied reports that they are being ordered to hasten up on some of Sulu. "The troops in this area will advance further forward," he said. Ellego said withdrawal is "not in the vocabulary of the military."

Sen. Richard Gordon said that in a phone conversation Sunday, Duterte demanded the troop withdrawal from Patanog town and barangays Bagg Bitil and Bunakan in Indanan as Año to resume negotiations for the release of Notter and Vagni.

Gordon declined to comment on Malacañang's announcement Monday that it had tapped a new emissary to help secure the freedom of the two ICRC hostages. "I don't know I'm out of the loop." But he said he continued to cooperate with the government.

He said he had passed on information to police about the hostages provided by the Italian ambassador, but declined to elaborate.

Holding back punches

"I reiterate the safety of the hostages is also my concern. That's my institutional and personal responsibility," said Gordon, who is also the first Philippine governor of the Geneva-based International Federation of the Red Cross.

A highly placed source in the Red Cross said that Duterte was holding his punches in his war of words with civilians and security officials who have screamed him of interfering in the negotiations.

"The source said that many military and local officials in Sulu wanted credit for the release of the two remaining hostages, thus jeopardizing ongoing talks between the Red Cross and the Abu Sayyaf.

"I'm willing to give them the medals as long as we can get the hostages alive. They can grab all the credit. I think people know what I'm doing," the source quoted Gordon as saying.

Ransom

Año yesterday, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said he was unaware that the Abu Sayyaf was paid P5.5 million in release Lacaba.

"No, no, no. Well, now that you said it, I'll have to make inquiries but it never came to my knowledge about the supposed ransom.

Ermita reiterated that nobody should give the bandit group air time or space in media or newspapers. He welcomed a statement by Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana to stop talking to the media about the hostage crisis.

"I agree with any action that won't give much attention to this group because by and large the objectives of the terrorists in the world is to call attention to their existence," he said.

Bravo also said yesterday that the kidnappers were demanding P5 million for the release of Notter and Vagni, but that Brig. Gen. Gondonato Mangliban, a military spokesperson, dismissed the news agency's report as "unsubstantiated information."

Bravo reports from Rivera Quintos-Deles, Christine O. Avendaño, Reuters

Meralco cites heat, intensive air-con use, for hike in power rates

From page A1

95-0231 per kWh, said Joe Zaldarriaga, manager for external communications of the utility firm.

Households consuming 200 kWh of electricity a month will see their bills for April increase by P1,868.23 from the March billing of P1,758.93.

Those consuming 100 kWh can expect their electricity bills increase by more than P90 to P903.79 from P802.49.

An increase in the basic generation charge has a corresponding increase in system loss charges and other added fee, among others, according to Meralco.

Intensive use of air-con

The increase in the basic generation charge is due to rising temperatures over the past weeks, which have jacked up electricity consumption, Zaldarriaga said.

"There was a marked increase in the consumption during the peak hours of 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. in March as consumers [dealt] with the summer heat through more intensive use of air-conditioning and other cooling appliances," he said.

"As a result, [electricity] purchases from National Power Corp. (Napocor) and the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM) went up by 6 percent and increases of P9.37 and P8.84 per kWh, respectively," he said.

In March, Napocor supplied 32.3 percent of Meralco's power requirements, while WESM supplied 14.5 percent. Meralco also gets power to supply from First Gen Corp., which owns the 1,000-MW Sta. Rita plant and the 500-MW San Lorenzo plant, both in Batangas, and from Quezon Power (Philippines).

Quezon Power operates a 460-megawatt coal-fired power plant in Luzon with a 37-kilometer transmission line.

Zaldarriaga noted that the average rate of First Gen and Quezon Power briefly moved during the two-month period.

Expensive power plants

During summer, consumers run expect higher basic generation charges as the more expensive power plants (usually coal-fired facilities) are run to meet the surge in demand during peak hours, Zaldarriaga said.

At the same time, power supply from hydroelectric plants declines because of the reduced water level in dams.

Meralco said that peak demand in its franchise area increased by almost 200 megawatts last month.

"We would like to emphasize that Meralco does not earn a single centavo from any adjustment in the cost of power supplied by the power producers. The generation charge is a pass-through charge which Meralco does not earn from," he said.

4.5 million customers

Meralco said last year 26.2 billion kWh of electricity to 4.5 million customers in 23 cities and 66 municipalities in Metro Manila, the entire provinces of Batangas, Rizal and Cavite, and parts of Laguna, Quezon, Bulacan and Pampanga.

Some 22 million people, a quarter of the country's population, live in Meralco's franchise area.

Meralco reminded its customers to use electricity wisely during the summer months because consumption levels were expected to rise.

Energy saving tips

Zaldarriaga said simple but often neglected energy saving tips were a big help in lowering electricity use, especially in households.

"Very simple tips such as using compact fluorescent lights instead of incandescent bulbs, drying your laundry at one time and opening refrigerators only when needed will, to one way or the other, help a household save on electricity," he said.

"Consumers actually have the power to control their usage," he said.

Appliances operate more efficiently and use less energy when they are in good working condition, the Meralco manager said.

Energy electricity from VAT

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile yesterday filed a bill seeking to lessen the cost of electricity by exempting power distribution utilities from the 12-percent value-added tax (VAT) and income tax.

Under Senate Bill No. 1147, Enrile asked Congress to impose just a franchise tax of three percent on gross distribution income of power utilities in lieu of all other taxes, duties and fees.

Enrile explained that under the present system, power industry players were required to pay ordinary income tax as well as the 12-percent VAT.

"This has therefore been pleased as a disadvantage as the energy components simply passed on to the end of paying these taxes once the end users," said Enrile in his explanatory note to the bill.

"This bill therefore seeks to correct the previous system where franchise tax is being required of distribution utilities are only to allow the industry players to enjoy a more equitable tax regime. More importantly, the imposition of a franchise tax which is directly absorbed by the franchisees will free the consumers from shouldering additional cost on electricity by exempting power distribution utilities from the 12-percent value-added tax (VAT) and income tax.

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He said Congress enacted the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira) in 2001 with the aim of establishing a more competitive and responsible electricity industry which shall hopefully, in turn, provide better services to the people at affordable and competitive prices.

To achieve this goal, the law provided for the restructuring and deregulation of the power industry, he said.

Constant rise in power rates

"However, five years after the passage of Epira, it became evident that some provisions of the law could not be properly addressed which, contrary to the objective of the law, led to a constant rise in power rates and also that is main beneficiaries at the part of the consumers," Enrile observed.

"In addition, taxes paid by incumbent players in the power sector become unreasonable that it discouraged an unabated investment in the industry of what were properly costs of doing business to the consumers." With some report from Michael Lim Ubac

GMA also to blame for killings due to Duterte alliance, says rights group

From page A1

About 31 cases of murders, blamed on the death squads, had been reported in the first three months this year, said Human Rights Watch.

The group called on the national government to "publicly denounce extrajudicial killings and halt antidrug campaign abuse pursuant to encourage the unlawful use of force."

Social cleansing

It also urged the government to investigate the death squads preying on alleged criminals purportedly for "social cleansing."

Sk drugs has appointed Duterte, her political ally, as her consultant on peace and order.

Mobilizing rejected Duterte's resignation, which the mayor said he did to give the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) a free hand in its public inquiry into the executions that had claimed the lives of more than 800 people, including children since 1998.

For Roth, the President should "not be entrusting a man who has, or have, an unconscionable relationship with the death squads."

"She should be choosing leadership by advancing the phenomenon, speaking out against it, dedicating governmental resources to investigating and putting as much distance as she can ... with anybody the Duterte who maintains a more intelligent attitude toward the death squads," Roth said.

The non-resident Irish said his group has been working up during its meeting yesterday with Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, who chairs the Presidential Human Rights Committee.

Scandal

But Roth, the foreign administration's inaction to end the violence deaths in Davao City has been nothing short of a "scandal" considering that an outside group like Human Rights Watch was able to gather so much information from various sources.

"The issue that I drive from this is that if an outside organization can come in, and in the course of a few months uncover irrefutable evidence of the existence of these death squads, where's the government?" Roth said.

He said there was a scandal here. "Until the CHR, which under its current leadership seems ready to get to the bottom of these death squads, begin to act, the government has been in denial," he said.

Convenient

"The fact that the government has done so little suggests that it was willing to close its eyes to the problem. That it found (the existence of death squads) convenient. That this may have been an ugly way to deal with crime, but it thought it was a useful 'one and so it was not going to do anything about it," he said.

The Human Rights Watch report aims to "break through the denial that has surrounded this issue," Roth said.

"It is simply an affront to reality for anybody to deny the existence of the death squad. We hope to put that denial to rest. There is a death squad," Roth said.

Roth said the group's simultaneous investigations of the killings did not shy evidence that directly linked Duterte.

Tacit support

But he said, the continued denial of the mayor that death squads roam his city translated to a "complete abdication" of leadership and "tacit" support for the killers.

"Because if he was not directly ordering (the hits), and that's obviously a contested issue, at minimum he is denying reality and in doing so, not taking the steps that any real leader would take in this is this mass murder," Roth said.

The press conference yesterday was attended by Gloria Alia, the mother of four brothers killed one after the other in a span of six years, who shared her story amid tears.

Alia appeared on the cover of the report, carrying a gourd, child with her right arm and a bullhorn on her left during a rally against summary executions.

CHR Chair Jose de Lima, who attended the launch, said the commission was "very happy about the Human Rights Watch report because I know this is going to have an effect on the course of administration and possible lives that the CHR can pursue in the course of its ongoing public inquiry."

Death squad insiders

The report contains 28 case studies of killings, including 18 that occurred from 2017 to 2018.

The investigation by Human Rights Watch included interviews with families of victims, witnesses, local police officials, prosecutors, and nine death squad insiders, including two barangay officials.

Roth said there were more than one death squad operating in the city given that a squad consists of only some four members or a time.

Proof of existence

The research yielded the following results, which for the group proved the existence of the death squads:

■ There was a pattern to the killings: Assailants arrive in twos or threes on a motorcycle without license plates, covering their faces with helmets and bandanas and wearing dark clothes or jackets apparently to conceal their weapons;

■ Victims are either shot or stabbed in broad daylight, with the latter form of killing seeming highly adapted to propagate the message that these are gang-war murders;

■ Barangay and police officials said at times even city government officials were sometimes victims that their names were on a "list" unless they dropped their alleged illegal activities; some victims were killed immediately after their release from jail;

■ Death squad "insiders" say that most members were either former rebels or those on the list themselves, and they called the group in question being killed;

■ The assassins' handlers were usually policemen or former policemen;

■ Death squad members often use .45-caliber handguns, which are known to be relatively low probability expensive for gang members and common criminals; "murders" say that police or barangay officials compile the lists of those engaged in criminal activities; Duterte are informed of crimes and who is why should be done in responding after the killing;

■ Payments for each "successful operation" ranges from P5,000 to P50,000 and may go as high as P100,000.

Meanwhile, Human Rights also investigated a number of killings wherein the victims were unarmed suspects as well as victims of mistaken identity.

It said that while the Duterte City government took pride in "peace and order," its crime rate far exceeded its population growth over a period of 10 years.

Statistics obtained by Human Rights Watch from the local police showed that from 1999 to 2008, annual crime rate from 979 to 3,304 or 246 percent increase in the city's population from 1.12 million to 1.44 million, or 29 percent, during the same period.

Copycats

Human Rights Watch also learned of reported copycat death squads in other Mindanao cities like Digos, Tagum and General Santos.

"We were told that members of the Davao Death Squad were providing training to the other death squads, which are also cracking down targets from Davao," Roth said.

Prove it, PNP chief dares rights groups

By Dennis Jay Santos
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY MAYOR RODRIGO Duterte yesterday said he still had to read the full report of the New York-based Human Rights Watch, which suggested the complicity of the local police and local government executives in the "unconscionable" execution of suspected criminals, in the city and nearby areas.

Defending official involvement in the killings in Davao City, Director General Ariel Versoza, the chief of the Philippine National Police (PNP), challenged human rights groups to prove allegations that the killings were "state-sponsored."

Duterte said he had been given a copy of the report yesterday morning, at about the same time the Human Rights Watch came out in Manila with "a detailed report" on the existence of the vigilante group called the "Davao Death Squad."

"I read it in a jiffy," he said.

Duterte said he could only comment on the report once he read everything in it. "I cannot open my mouth too much," he said.

The mayor reiterated he had relinquished his supervisory control over the police and the military contingent "Task Force Davao" in the city.

He said it was meant to have the Commission on Human Rights and other investigating agencies a free hand in their probe of the killings.

"If I remain at the helm of the police, it will go back to me," he said, referring to the charges that he has allegedly masterminded or gave tacit approval to the summary killings.

Well-intentioned but ...

As he discussed the supposed police text to probe the 1998 arson thoroughly, Duterte declared that the killings attributed to the Davao Death Squad had the blessing of residents.

"My acknowledge that human rights organizations documenting the series of alleged vigilante killings in Davao City are well-intentioned, but are completely disagree with their conclusion that these killings were state-sponsored," said Versoza in a statement.

He added that the charges "should be backed by evidences so that appropriate cases may be pursued and filed before the courts of law." With some report from Rivera Quintos-Deles

RP removed from tax haven blacklist

PARIS—THE PHILIPPINES AND THREE other nations will no longer be blacklisted as uncooperative tax havens after they bowed to pressure from world leaders and agreed to new rules on financial operations, an international organization said Tuesday.

Angel Gurría, head of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), said in a press conference that the Philippines, Uruguay, Costa Rica and Malaysia have been moved off the black list after they agreed to cooperate with international audits of them.

"These less jurisdictions have now made a full commitment to exchange information according to the OECD standard," he said. "This is very important progress."

G-20 leaders meeting in London last week pledged to crack down on tax havens, reflecting the increasing concern that banking secrecy in tax havens has helped to worsen the economic crisis by depriving the true value of some global assets.

Anti-poverty activists say countries with banking secrecy provide cover for officials with rule havens to misbuild funds, often depriving poor nations of needed resources. AP

Diesel, kerosene prices reduced

By Jerry V. Rosco

PILIPINAS SHELL PETROLEUM CORP. AND Chevron Corp. slashed prices of diesel and kerosene by P2 a liter and of gasoline by 50 centavos a liter, effective 6 p.m. yesterday.

Total Philippines followed suit, implementing the same rollback effective 6 a.m. today (April 8). At the same time, PTT Philippines cut prices of its gasoline by 50 centavos a liter, and diesel by P2 a liter.

Roberto Kanapi, Shell vice president for communications, said the latest price adjustment reflected the reduction in product costs.

Meanwhile, Flying V Philippines said "it has maintained prices at competitive levels at all times and would move prices accordingly—up or per trading developments." /rvr

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, April 8, 2009
Wednesday, Holy Week

1st Reading: Is 50:4-9a
Gospel: Mt 26:14-25

"Jesus one of the Twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went off to the chief priests and said, 'What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?' They promised to give him thirty pieces of silver, and from then on he kept looking for the best way to hand him over to them.

On the first day of the Festival of the Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and said to him, 'Where do you want us to prepare the Passover meal for you?' Jesus answered, 'Go into the city, to the house of a certain man, and tell him, "The Master says: My time is near, and I will celebrate the Passover with my disciples in your house."' The disciples did as Jesus had ordered and prepared the Passover meal.

When it was evening, Jesus sat at table with the Twelve. While they were eating, Jesus said, 'Truly I say to you: one of you will betray me.' They were deeply distressed and each asked him in turn, 'You do not mean me, do you, Lord?' He answered, 'He who will betray me is one of those who dip his bread in the dish with me. The Son of Man is going to the scriptures say he will. But alas for that man who betrays the Son of Man; better for him not to have been born.' Judas, who was betraying him, also asked, 'You do not mean me, rabbi, do you?' Jesus replied, 'You have said it.'

COMMENTARY

Arguments about the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot have continued throughout the centuries. He did it for exactly why Judas betrayed Jesus, but we do know that, over time, the shame of being identified with the betrayer of Jesus. (Not might have explained his betrayal. He has that it was the world's most notorious betrayal. However, is undeniable. Judas betrayed Jesus. But after being betrayed, Jesus went on to fulfill the messianic prophecy, he would suffer and die in the ultimate act of redemption, to release all humankind from the power of sin and the devil.

Finally, we conclude, we could never betray Jesus as Judas did. However, we only expect the only to be fully known earlier, we see this side of heaven. The news that people perish due to selfishness or religious pride is the opposite way. But we've been given God (when have a) our right and free will to choose—even those who have acts of betrayal are allowed to find the sinner (not of society, worthy only up sinning terrible crimes against humanity, which, thankfully, can be taken for granted by us. Attempt to prepare in the only manner we have against Christ all our ages.

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OPINION

Shared suffering

EDITORIAL

THE STORY OF BATAAN, NOW SADLY NEGLECTED in memories fade and the ranks of our veterans are decimated by age and illness, points to a lesson increasingly relevant in our present era of impunity. That lesson is not only the strong sense of a shared destiny felt by ordinary conscripts, their officers, and leaders, but the expectation of sacrifice as a communal ethic, which prevailed carnage when those expectations weren't met.

Our wartime generation felt it keenly when the wealthy or mighty flaunted their wealth, or at the very least put their well-being ahead of the public welfare. In a sense, our society has never recovered from the public scandal caused by the combination of timidity and self-aggrandizement put on such public display by prominent Filipinos during the war.

For the survivors of that war, the chronicle of the rise and fall of all who aspired to public leadership in the decades that followed could be traced to whether their fellow citizens believed they were capable of leading by example and acting in a manner respectful of public decency. The moment leaders began to act in a manner considered not only remote, and thus, out of touch, public support began to wane; and once or any official who began to believe as if contemptuous of public expectations of decency and morality—they would become enemies of the people.

Ferdinand Marcos, the enemy decades the exemplar of the values of the wartime generation and famously proud of his wartime record, followed this path and his career experienced the full trajectory of a narcissistic rise to power and a grim crash to earth, when all his carefully-choreographed myths were proven illusions.

So, in the solemn commemorations Bataan, we consider it not only timely but necessary to point out to our officials that—even as they exercise command and control over the Armed Forces and the police, are they doing so by example?

For several years now, residents and visitors to the country's summer capital, Baguio City, have been scandalized by the rare treats taken to protest the President of the Philippines when she makes her annual begin to the Mansion House. Tight security for a head of state is par for the course, but these precautions are perpetually measured against the behavior of past chief executives.

We cannot recall a time, not even during the Marcos years, when the vicinity of the Mansion House featured soldiers huddled in pup tents, shivering in the damp under the pine trees; and forced to line up at barangay halls for their rations. This spectacle of soldierly squalor is a cause for public offense, precisely because President Macapagal-Arroyo, in so many ways living life according to presidential lore norms, has made the annual presidential trek to Baguio a feature of her term.

The President and her officials usually make inspection trips or schools, markets, and local governments, which is well and good. But she also spends purely family time at the Mansion House, waited upon hand and foot. Besides which she, her family and her aides and retainers go to the Country Club to play golf. These activities of the high and mighty all take place, not necessarily in full public view, but in full view of the soldiers, huddled and shivering, in their tents along the Mansion House's perimeter.

And what are these soldiers seeing but merely that power has its rewards and that the powerless, the lowranking, and the subordinate must have their comfort and well-being set aside, too, for the leisure time of those in command?

That a private in private, the Filipino does not begrudge the good fortune of others. All this we hear, time and again, and to a certain extent, this is true. But the Filipino also has a keenly developed sense of right and wrong. They may not complain, but they are watching and learning, and what they have seen and learned will come back to haunt future generations when the soldiers huddled by the Mansion House become generals in turn.

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Summers past for growing boys

IT IS ON THESE LAZY SUMMER DAYS THAT one's daughter runs to summers past and the happy memories of those years when he was growing up.

Commanders that I couldn't wait for school to end so that the summer vacations and the happy times would begin. There were so many things to do, so many places to explore, so many games to play.

There were sizzling chess, tops, kites, Gilbey plates, and hard boys to make; money valid tokens, many models and creatures to make—many fish and crabs to catch; many trees to climb; many fruits to pick and eat; and a big river with clear cool water to swim in.

I think that although it is part of the urban jungle that is Metro Manila now, Malabon of the past was the best place for a boy to grow up in. Although it is now downtown Manila, Malabon on our side of the river was then still largely rural, with banana fields, vegetable patches, and hectares and hectares of lalapunan. The lalapunan stretched as far as the eye could see, separated only by the line of mangrove trees growing along their banks, and the wind blew across them. Independence day that year when the sun was at its hottest, you didn't feel the heat as you flew kites because the breeze was cool and you became mesmerized watching and

There were many kinds of fish in the ponds, and on my grass boat, you could see children lined up along the banks fishing with hook and line. The milkfish, carbs, and parasan were all fishes but you could catch anything else that the river knew. Small boys would dive into the fishing them from the air. Salted for the occasional finger-sized, golden milkfish "bayo" with two arrows long fishing poles and thread with baited hooks underneath.

The bigger boys fished with bigger and longer fishing poles and tried fishing from from the concrete water poles that regulated the flow of water and where the water was deepest. Here, there were bigger fish such as the mighty bangus, bandi, and "dalag." For my big adventure and to target practice the "bulbol." Both are luscious grade fish that fought the hook and made fishing there thrilling. There was also the big, fun-skinned "frying pan" but they were no fighters. Sometimes, there were the big mudfish "dalag," but they took hooks baited with live bugs.

That was before the age of the shrimp. But now that the fish that fed those Chris and his daughter in Malabon days has become popular, sometimes there are more shrimps than any other fish in Malabon waters.

The Dominican Salvadore and Cannon rivers fed the lalapunan with fresh seawater. Their waters were still clean and clean then, and you could open your eyes when swimming under water and see the bottom and the swimming fish and the flourishing bugs of the other boys.

Like the many open fields and lalapunan, the rivers were the playgrounds of Malabon children. They made the children, girls included, learn how to swim almost as soon as they learned how to walk.

Sometimes on several days, no boys would get into a boats and just float down the river and go on mysterious trips with our daughters at the clubs considering among the tangled roots of the mangrove trees. Or in the old-fashioned kingfishers perched on the branches, waiting to dive into the water or an unsuspecting fish.

On land, there were many nooks and crannies to explore, everybody and their neighbors had fruit trees to climb. There were all sorts of fruit trees in Malabon at that time, all growing among the branches of the trees. When you climbed more like the guavas or tamarind or sampaloc, you found that there made for the taking and eating.

Sometimes there were berries climbing among the lower trees, the bushes and the

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

bamboos. The rarest yellow and red berries were a real treasure discoveries.

Beside the low-point dikes, almost level with the water, fish and water snakes called "dahas" sheltered in the shade of the weeds growing over the water. Siblings said crabs called "talangka" were also found there, but I never saw them. Sometimes when we scurried into their holes when you approached. The siblings lived in themselves in the mud but with their eyes showing. It was easy to look for the eyes and then grab with bamboo and bamboo sticks them at the head and pushed a struggling shrimp in your hand.

Then there were the birds, lizards and insects. Because there were many trees, naturally there were many birds. Like the many colors, species and sizes. Sometimes you would be treated hear, accurate by the sweet song of a bird, and you looked up and searched for it, following the source of the song and you would see a colorful bird, perhaps a yellow oriole and you had one of the sweetest songs I have ever heard (they are gone now).

The lizards were big brown ones called "tuko," five times the size of a house lizard. They hunted for part in the undergrowth, but when you approached, they would scurry away with a loud shrieking among the dry leaves.

Insects were plentiful. When you entered a grove of trees, you were greeted by the hum of the cicadas, and when you walked through tall grass, the insects would make the path for the birds of a tree right in front of you, you could not see it until you came near and it flew off with a screech.

Then you walked the good lands and grasslands, brown grasshoppers hopped ahead of you. Dragonflies also hovered ahead of you, the small blue and white ones perching on the tips of blades of grass then flying away when you approached them. The bigger red ones hovered over the water like helicopters, swooping down to get your eyes and face.

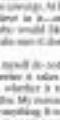
Butterflies of all colors and sizes fluttered everywhere among the flowers. And here, there were the fireflies that glowed among the flowers of pandan, ipil, and betel vines.

Oh, those were the days.

Fighting 'aswangs'

THERE'S THE RUB

Comrades de Quiros



THERE'S SOMETHING IN COMMON BETween cowings and Charter change.

No, I'm not being facetious. And, no, it's not because both are horrific sights, though there's that too.

Aswangs have a way of making their appearance at all hours but are loved feeding time, then because it is the time of the dead and the dead have to release their day too, and the second because it is the day Jesus Christ died, which emboldens the things that go bump in the night to use the window of opportunity before Easter to ply their trade. The tabloids to perpetuate they have been known to report sightings of these here and there on these days.

What makes aswangs popular in this country? Or if no longer popular, at least a persistent feature of the Filipino mind? There are many sociological theories there. My own is that aswangs fulfill a great need to empower people, if vicariously.

Aswangs are fearsome, terrifying, all-powerful. But for all that, they are not beyond being destroyed. They are not beyond being vanquished. They are an abomination that can be seen. Such values they cannot to stand into consider this duet with the aid of sacred and Christian items: garlic, sunlight, the stake, water (preferable holy), the crucifix. Of course, they always manage to come back, like their bizarre Hollywood cousin, Dracula, by various means, but the important thing is they can be whipped, get some respite from their depredations.

For all its monstrousness, transcendental evil is ultimately easier to dispel or destroy. Not so its more mundane, worldly, even banal enemy. Of lagoon one always set up watch to be the night, organize themselves into groups and, armed with troubles or their modern-day counterparts, flashlights and flamethrowers, and the religious relics mentioned above, chase aswangs away. Not so easy to set up watch in the day, organize private groups and, armed with the same style of weapons, repudiate lies, or even more counterspeech, freedom, democracy, and People Power, chase Gaston away. Inhuman evil is always easier to deal with than human one. Human evil is in fact more inhuman than inhuman evil, but that's another story.

Aswangs are a substitute for a very real evil in our midst. Fighting them is a substitute for fighting a very real flesh-and-blood evil.

Charter change is not unlike aswangs. At least for those who instantly believe in it—and I know people who do, but who would like to have it offer GMA goes, to make sure it doesn't extend term.

I've said in the past that I myself do not believe in Charter change: whether it takes the form of con-con or con-con, whether it takes place before GMA leaves or after. My reason for that is simple: It won't change anything. It won't improve anything. Certainly it won't improve the country's capacity to meet the tsunami of global recession, which some of its exponents are hinting it would do. Charter change is to the economic recession as wearing amulets is to tsunami fire. Wearing amulets probably has more effect in deflecting manifestations. Charter change is not going to change anything other than, well, the Charter.

One problem is not being able to have the right Charter can produce is not being able to obey the Charter. Or, since the Charter is merely the highest law of the land, any problem is not having the right laws, only problem is not being able to obey the laws. We are a country of laws and lawyers. Every day the Senate and House of Representatives, quite apart from the justice department and the courts, debate points of law; the lawyers among them calling on their legal brethren and pronouncing each other and the country along with them, with their legal nose and cheek. Yet we are one of the most lawless countries in the world, an unshaved president

rules, government lies, cheats, and steals, political activists and journalists are murdered by the day. In the face of which we chide, many muttering, "Let's move on."

First, let us obey the law, then let us change the Charter. First, let us bathe in the spirit of law, then let us change the Charter. First, let us hold fast to the fundamental laws of God and of man, of heaven and earth, of the head and the heart, which are set to be, not to cheat, not to steal, and not to kill, then let us change the Charter.

That is what makes Charter change like aswangs.

Like aswangs, the old Charter becomes a repository of all the evils of the world. Like aswangs, the old Charter becomes the watchword of everything we do not want, or the source of all the ills that have visited us. Like aswangs, the old Charter becomes the abomination, the devil's equivalent. And we must cast back others to come from or pull or be more than with the aid of legal mumbo-jumbo and the pagan relics of congressional pomp and circumstance.

Like fighting aswangs, changing the Charter has turned to the magic wand that offers instant relief from blood-curdling and unrelenting depredations. Like fighting aswangs, changing the Charter has to be from the need to do something about the very real evils, abominations, and sources of lawlessness and unrelenting corruption in our midst. Like fighting aswangs, changing the Charter gives us the illusion that we are doing something about the banes and plagues and horrors that have made this country their home, which we are unwilling or unable to do in any other or even face. Filled as we are with the fear of such puerile fears that we cannot of the deep and dark and ever indoor videos in how we merely even move the house with the wretches on fight to pursue phantoms.

When in fact it is not to move from but to surrender that we are unchallenge. When in fact it is to be more than ever vigilant that we are disposition. When in fact it is not to use Charter less to our stupidity than we are supposed.

Police, local officials linked to vigilantes

"GOD GAVE ME AND THEE" IS THE APT TITLE OF the 103-page report of Bantay Bagong Pilak on the orgy of killings that have claimed the lives of 10.4 victims in Davao City from August 1998 to as recently as 8th may 2009 at the hands of death squads.

The report released yesterday by the Sara Soth-based organization as a precondemnation by BBPI executive director Kenneth Roth details the involvement of police and local government officials in the targeted killings of alleged drug dealers and petty criminals. And decries the lack of any effort by the authorities to investigate the killings and bring the perpetrators to justice.

Police criminology records, Roth said, show the seven legal vigilante style squarely on the shoulders of the authorities. The hundreds of targeted killings in Davao City in recent years are clearly no random events but the result of planned hits by a "death squad" that used police officers and other officials in the targeted killings of alleged drug dealers and petty criminals. And decries the lack of any effort by the authorities to investigate the killings and bring the perpetrators to justice.

Police criminology records, Roth said, show the seven legal vigilante style squarely on the shoulders of the authorities. The hundreds of targeted killings in Davao City in recent years are clearly no random events but the result of planned hits by a "death squad" that used police officers and other officials in the targeted killings of alleged drug dealers and petty criminals, sloppily committed during daytime details by Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte at the insistence of the Davao Death Squad (DDS). The report of Human Rights Watch's investigation of 29 cases of apparently targeted killings in Davao City between 1998 and 2008 implicated various families, witnesses, journalists, human rights campaigners, and government officials in Davao City, General Santos City and Digos City.

The data makes gruesome reading. The number of victims of targeted killings in Davao City for 2008 has increased in the past decade, from nine reported cases in 1998 to 98 in 2008, and 126 in 2008. In 2008, 33 targeted killings were reported in January alone.

The report found a pattern to the killings. "The

ANALYSIS

Armando Doronila

assailants usually arrived in twos or threes on a motorcycle without a license plate; they wore baseball caps and baseball shirts or jackets, apparently to conceal their weapons, and they shoot to kill their victims immediately, usually in broad daylight with little regard for those witnessing the crime."

Barangay officials, police officers and sometimes city government officials frequently warned people, who subsequently became victims of these killings, that they were marked for death and would be killed unless they stopped engaging in criminal activities. In other cases, the victims were killed immediately after they release from police custody or prison.

According to Deane Danth Jignal "leaders," "death squad members" and other persons connected to the People's Army insurgents or young men who have either never clearly signed targets and who joined the group to avoid being killed. Their families, usually policemen or former policemen, provided them with training, weapons and sometimes motorcycles, and told them to shoot to kill.

According to the report, assailants and "Hitmen have also obtained information about their targets from the police or barangay officials, who compile lists of those engaged in criminal activities." The report even explained "that police stations are notified in advance of the time and place where they plan to suspend to such killings. Police units at the scene hang after the assailants leave, even if the police station is minutes away. Police often fail to collect obvious evidence such as spent bullet casings, or to question witnesses or suspects, but instead pres-

Two Gospels

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING TELLS THE STORY of the betrayal of Judas, who, in exchange for 30 pieces of silver, agrees to identify Jesus to the chief priests on the eve of the Passover Feast.

Judas was one of the 12 apostles, but occupied a truly important position as keeper of the purse, managing the common fund. "Unless otherwise has into his closest circle of friends could have been a great responsibility in the group of disciples," writes Fr. Rudy Rosal, SVD, in the order's "Bible Diary." Judas was also the one who betrayed Jesus, the Gospels. In other words, Judas enjoyed the trust and confidence not just of Jesus but of all the other apostles, and not by chance to betray this trust and both with betrayal and disloyalty.

All the intense focus when happened to Judas after his betrayal have focused on the motive for the act of a "few." Thwarted by enemies, he (in some versions of the story) committed the 30 pieces of silver and then hanged himself or ran into a cliff, in some versions torn apart, causing his guts to spill to the ground). No matter his name have been equated with betrayal, and becoming equated other everything evil and sinful.

And yet, there are those who say that Judas who had so much a "bad rap" of Jesus, as His partner in salvation. Recently, the National Geographic Channel aired a documentary on the "Gospel of Judas," which was discovered in the Egyptian desert in Egypt in the 1970's describing the story of the death of Jesus, told from the point of view of Judas.

"According to a 2006 translation of the manuscript . . . it is apparently a Gnostic account of the entanglement between Jesus and Judas, with Jesus asking Judas to betray him so [Jesus] can be free to help Jesus finish his appointed task from God," one source says.

* * *

THE FATE of Judas brings many questions to mind. Did he carry out Jesus' will, the division of labor in the group? Or did he betray Jesus because he wanted to fulfill the prophecy of salvation, was he indeed acting out of "free will" when he betrayed Jesus? If he was "predestined" to fulfill Jesus' prophesied death, did he commit a sin?

FOR 23 YEARS THE ORDAS POOR HAVE attempted in their annual "Kalbaryo" to understand how the sufferings and deaths of Jesus are repeated in the sufferings of the poor and how his resurrection is repeated in the efforts of the poor to free themselves from poverty.

In 1987 the first Kalbaryo was held on Smokey Mountain where it was still an active dumpsite. Scavengers were working under clouds of flies, though it was food inside, it was steaming hot and the smell was that of a combination of rotting garbage and human excrement. Yesterday marked the 23rd anniversary of the event's poverty, as it was appropriate that Kalbaryo be held there.

The stories playing from Mary, the Holy Women and the Roman soldiers climbed through the garbage to the top and there re-enacted the crucifixion of Jesus. Then they climbed down and began kneeling. There were thousands of people at the bottom of the hill, and there at the last moment the Centurion, played by a young woman, Tata Lucas, presented herself on the garbage. The crowd gasped and then was silent, as if they had witnessed a miracle. Then they all began to pray for the Kalbaryo has used drama, songs and dance for us to grasp this mystery of identification with Jesus in his death and resurrection, not in order to better another than ourselves.

Another year the Kalbaryo moved in favorites with the theme of the passage of St. Christine Tan, and there were re-enacted other urban poor scenes by the late 1980s and early 1990s the Kalbaryo had become a truly professional dance that took place at high noon in Mendiola. The dancers were clothed monks that pictured Asia drop in their hands and feet.

In the script the same words were used by Pilate to condemn Jesus and the Pharisees and the Roman soldiers to condemn the urban poor: both were called "trouble makers, malcontents, opportunists, outsiders." There was absolute silence, though there were many present. Only the buzz could of the insects and carnivorous vultures was heard. Subversion of their lives and came matter to use and here more closely.

Some years only a hundred or so people participated. Another year a group planned to sing the "Pabasa" all night in Quezon Memorial Circle Park as part of the Kalbaryo. There was a cell line of people that the organizers of the singing was all alone in the dark of the Circle. When the other women got there they found her singing very bravely. She was delighted to see the other women, because since the Pabasa it started it shouldn't be interrupted and she had been afraid she'd be alone all dance night just the cats and dogs of the Circle.

Another year the Kalbaryo was held in the Cubayao subdivision center. Some 5,000 or so families had just moved in, they had been evicted from Makati, San Andres and other places along the railroad tracks. They were living in tents, tarpaulin tents, school, makeshift chairs or jobs. There in some had dragged by 10 percent. Next to the school people was another garbage dump, which when it rained heavily saw a black water liquid from the dumpsite into the people's homes.

About 1,000 people followed the priest through the streets. We came to the foot of the garbage dump where the death of Jesus was enacted. We couldn't go further because the people were not allowed on the dump. The dead Jesus was lying evidently numb and who was carried into a nearby house by his mother. He was dysfunctional up, the mock was removed and he was dressed in shining white clothes. When he re-appeared, resurrected and smiling as any young man might smile after a great victory, the people cheered. It's easy to believe there was a connection between Jesus' victory over pain and death, and their efforts to improve their very bad situation.

In the past few years the overall situation did improve thanks to Ito Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, the National Housing Authority, the local mayors and barangay captains, but mainly because of the people who demanded improvements and cooperated with government agencies. It ought to help. There were the same people who celebrated the Kalbaryo.

Last April 1, the urban poor once again marched with Jesus, in triumph on a horse from Liwasang Bonifacio to Plaza Miranda accompanied by a Mother once and carrots celebrating in the city's streets. Jesus was not in the car. There was a procession of song, dance and drama to Plaza Miranda, interpreting certain themes, such as Jesus in Crowne and Veronica's veil. There was a reading of the Charter of the Poor which contains the issues the poor believe must be agreed upon by the government and civil society. They include a ban on forced evictions without good reason, land tenure security, basic services for all, decent homes, jobs and food.

Finally Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales said Mass in Quiapo Church, with other priests and bishops.

Rina Jimenez-David's e-mail address is rjimenez@philstar.net.

'Kalbaryo'

COMMENTARY

Dennis Murphy

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Some years only a hundred or so people participated. Another year a group planned to sing the "Pabasa" all night in Quezon Memorial Circle Park as part of the Kalbaryo. There was a cell line of people that the organizers of the singing was all alone in the dark of the Circle. When the other women got there they found her singing very bravely. She was delighted to see the other women, because since the Pabasa it started it shouldn't be interrupted and she had been afraid she'd be alone all dance night just the cats and dogs of the Circle.

Another year the Kalbaryo was held in the Cubayao subdivision center. Some 5,000 or so families had just moved in, they had been evicted from Makati, San Andres and other places along the railroad tracks. They were living in tents, tarpaulin tents, school, makeshift chairs or jobs. There in some had dragged by 10 percent. Next to the school people was another garbage dump, which when it rained heavily saw a black water liquid from the dumpsite into the people's homes.

About 1,000 people followed the priest through the streets. We came to the foot of the garbage dump where the death of Jesus was enacted. We couldn't go further because the people were not allowed on the dump. The dead Jesus was lying evidently numb and who was carried into a nearby house by his mother. He was dysfunctional up, the mock was removed and he was dressed in shining white clothes. When he re-appeared, resurrected and smiling as any young man might smile after a great victory, the people cheered. It's easy to believe there was a connection between Jesus' victory over pain and death, and their efforts to improve their very bad situation.

In the past few years the overall situation did improve thanks to Ito Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, the National Housing Authority, the local mayors and barangay captains, but mainly because of the people who demanded improvements and cooperated with government agencies. It ought to help. There were the same people who celebrated the Kalbaryo.

Last April 1, the urban poor once again marched with Jesus, in triumph on a horse from Liwasang Bonifacio to Plaza Miranda accompanied by a Mother once and carrots celebrating in the city's streets. Jesus was not in the car. There was a procession of song, dance and drama to Plaza Miranda, interpreting certain themes, such as Jesus in Crowne and Veronica's veil. There was a reading of the Charter of the Poor which contains the issues the poor believe must be agreed upon by the government and civil society. They include a ban on forced evictions without good reason, land tenure security, basic services for all, decent homes, jobs and food.

Finally Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales said Mass in Quiapo Church, with other priests and bishops.

Dennis Murphy works with the Urban Poor Associates. His e-mail address is upa@pldtdsl.net.

'Pabasa' on a carabao

YESTERDAY'S Inquirer HAD A FRONT PAGE ARTICLE BY Dennis Pascalgan, with a title, "Pabasa' for the unrelenting, not loud reading." The article was based on an interview with Msgr. Pedro Quitorio, media director of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, where the bishop clarified that the Pabasa —a chanted ritual that recounts Christ's sufferings—can ensure for meditation.

"It is chanted because (1) communication, but it should not be a loud chanting," Quitorio was quoted as saying. He also added that people should not be "there for show," and de-

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

cried the way politicians end up sponsoring a Pabasa, or having people paid. Asked what he thought about the poor habitat of using rap for the Pabasa, he said there was no problem, as long as the lyrics were retained.

A Pabasa rap wouldn't be eclipsing, although I encourage you here discussing it would probably be for many enlightenment. The story of Christ's Passion has found many forms of expression, as we can all seen mall here in Germany's Passion plays, enacted in the streets, are probably the most well-known. In the Philippines, the Senakulo of Mayombuyan is an innovation, retelling Christ's Passion from the perspective of one of the Roman executioners.

In our own modern times, we've seen rewrite of films, using the parodic about Christ's Passion. A rap Pabasa wouldn't be literally new considering that there has already been "Jesus Christ Superstar," there on stage and on film, and still enjoyed from time to time.

The Pasyon scripts, and our Pabasa Cristo texts also called Pasyon's, are not just religious texts. They are intended by which to understand the public, that is social doctrine. Even how ancient Christ's Passion and death are to Christian doctrine, the Pabasa is there to hammer down the passages around Christ's redemption act. (Note that there are several versions of the Pasyon, including a Pasyon Bicolano, which actually starts with the Genesis, in effect condensing the whole Bible into a Holy Week Pabasa.)

Folk epics

Some years back, the historian Reynaldo Ileto made waves with his book "Pasyon and Revolution," where he suggested that the Pasyon played a strong role in Filipino anti-colonial struggles. He proposed that the Pabasa took on the functions of pre-colonial epic poems that were chanted on by village elders. These elders epic poems were passed on orally, and took days to complete. The pasyon, however, was chanted in a more condensed fashion, often between and functions as well as villains. The Christus were universal—the triumph of good over evil, the need to respect saints, the gods, the elderly—but the stories took many forms.

The Pasyon, Ileto proposed, allowed Filipinos a language to express their oppression and suffering, as well as a basis of identification.

Ileto's theses was intriguing. Remember that until fairly recently Holy Week in the Philippines was extremely silent, with the elders in many places imposing very strict rules on silence, no fishing, no self-disciplines (no fighting on Good Friday), and no loud music. Pabasa would be interrupting the Palace's waiting chants, allowing (forcing?) people to reflect on its messages, and more importantly, to project and relate to, i.e., the suffering passion could see himself as an imitating Christ.

Water Buffalo Theology

The power of Pabasa and traditional ritual has in the way they relate to people's daily concerns. The rituals' power at times as well from the way their symbols relate to local culture. The Pasyon was chanted in local languages and its length and cadence as well as meter lines (Octet having pentet, tetrasyllabic lines rising from the death-controlled people of Christ) was local.

I wanted to relate all this to the work of a Japanese Protestant theologian, Kosuke Koyama, who passed away last week. Koyama a familiar to many Filipino Catholic and Protestant social action activists from the 1970's because of his book "Water Buffalo Theology," published by Maryknoll in 1974. Koyama's book was a classic in its time, but is not read. In good books go, it went at used many times, and then never returned, but I still remember many of the themes (with the help of a lot of Internet research, which still couldn't get me to the entire book but did provide many hints, and scanning excerpts from the book).

One chapter title, "Coconuts Not Cut," "Amorphous salt and Buddhist Concepts." This was a way of saying that Christianity (with its Aristotelian roots) was/is by its principles in a culturally appropriate way (for example, looking for symbols in Buddhism, if you were working in Thailand). Koyama's own cultural background explored how Aristotle and Buddhist came into the picture, he grew up in Japan, converting to Christianity, receiving his theological education in the United States, and serving for several years as a missionary in Thailand. Koyama said that in the Asian context, symbols like the water buffalo and rainbow, etc., were important to having into discussions of religion. He also pointed out the need to look at differences in spiritualities. He talked of "God" in the Asian context as "Sun" while in the Western tradition, "God" means a more cyclical view of the world and of God while "Sun" was more hierarchically-oriented, more linear.

Some of Koyama's writings have been subtly creeping in still basically reflecting his own Western training. The idea of a "cold" Christianity, religious symbolism, coconuts is of course a stereotype, as recent visits to Thailand will attest. The water buffalo, too, not exactly the most appropriate spiritual symbol for Asians, given its association with steal and a load lofty. (Note how in the Philippines "carabao Region" connotes ordinary).

But I still like the water buffalo metaphor, maybe because I've always liked the coolness. My dissertation for my various may needs her degree was actually on the gentle basis of a carabao.

If I were asked to choose some Christ traits in the Philippines today, I'd say we have a mix. The Pabasa shows a loud and noisy Christ, but there are also the quiet Christ in our everyday lives, the heroic Christ in the streets, the Christ in the signatures—you know, the saviors levelled with the Spirit. On the other hand, I can imagine the Pabasa being chanted (or chanted or sung) by a group driving along the road by a carabao, three kilometers (let's go metric) an hour, alongside rice-soil and mangoes. I'm only choosing Dom Wayne, who talked about "mindful running." Here Water Buffalo Christ," to emphasize how social issues in our walking speed. I'd modify that and say, at the speed of the carabao.

During Holy Week and beyond, we glad along on a carabao-drawn cart. It can make us not by important, unless we latterhand to the message of the Pasyon.

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
BUREAU OF FOOD AND DRUGS
Filinvest Corporate City
Alabang, Muntinlupa City

03 April 2009

BFAD ADVISORY
No. 2009-004

Immediate Recall of Setton Farms Premium California Roasted Salted Pistachios and Setton Farms Roasted Salted Pistachios from the US

In the interest of public welfare and protection, the Bureau of Food and Drugs orders the immediate recall of

1. **Setton Farms Premium California Roasted Salted Pistachios** imported by Duty Free Philippines, and
2. **Setton Farms Roasted Salted Pistachios** imported by Andalucia Trading Co., Inc.

because of possible risk of *Salmonella* contamination. This is due to the reported US Food and Drugs Administration investigation of *Salmonella* contamination in pistachio products sold by Setton Pistachio of Terra Bella Inc., California and the establishment's voluntary recall of its processed Pistachio products.

The BFAD has directed the above-named importers to immediately withdraw or cause the withdrawal within twenty-four (24) hours from today of the above products from all market shelves.

For the same reason above, this Office hereby directs all supermarkets and retailers to withdraw the said products from their shelves and enjoins everyone not to eat the same products.

PROF. LETICIA-BARBARA B. GUTIERREZ, M.S.
Director

When 'underworld' figures run RP. . .

LETTERS

THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (CHR) is going after vigilantes and human rights violators. CHR Chair Leila de Lima wants to uncover the truth behind the unsolved killings and executions of suspected criminals—petty drug pushers, recidivists, etc. It is believed that a "Davao Death Squad" (DDS) is behind the so-called "death justice" operation which sows fear among criminals—first, by giving them a warning and then executing them if they continue with their usual ways. Some of the victims are said to be poor people who were forced to commit robberies to live and survive. A number of Davaoenos are reportedly happy about the murder of some big fish among drug traffickers and shabu operators.

The Philippines could be the next Mexico, where drug cartels control politicians and where some drug lords have themselves become influential politicians and where law enforcers and the judges are "self-coached" by the drug mobs and allied syndicates using their laughing money as bait. Our whole system is vastly susceptible mainly because of the low salaries and wages of our public servants.

The situation is getting worse. The drug cartels are now so powerful and well-organized that a narco-politician could be one-term president in 2010. Their propaganda can even hire the best and the most influential lawyers that money can buy. They can easily put on their payroll top-notch public relations practitioners and media persons to condition the public mind into believing the integrity of their "puppets" who can be through their (such) whole-looking people-straight in the eye.

So, the deterioration of drug syndicates is a public matter. But the drug threat in our country right now has become an urgent national security concern. The "human wiring" must be reviewed and addressed as soon as possible, lest we wake up one day to embrace a "new underworld order."

—ERICK IAN JUAN
rubberman9905@yahoo.com.ph

CORRECTION

The third sentence in the third paragraph of Conrado de Quiros' column "The war ahead" should have read: "Bodies, like masks, have been known to cause the savage beast ..."—not savage beast.—Ed.

BATANGAS II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

NOTICE OF PRE-BIDDING

April 15, 2009 10:00 AM
IFB 2009-06 SUPPLY & DELIVERY OF VARIOUS MATERIALS & EQUIPMENT
IFB 2009-07 SUPPLY & DELIVERY OF STOCKS & MATERIALS FOR METER CLUSTERING ACTIVITIES

April 15, 2009 1:00 PM
IFB 2009-08 SUPPLY OF VARIOUS OFFICE SUPPLIES & SAFETY PPEs

Cost of Bid Documents: Php5,000 / 3,000.00 & 2,500.00 for IFB 2009-06; 07; 08 respectively
Venue: Basement Section BATELEC II
Aerilpolo del Norte, Lipa City, Batangas

For Inquiries, please contact
Ms. AURORA A. ILAGAN
Telefax (043) 321-1326 Cel. 0919-821-3281

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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Social Welfare and Development
National Penitentiary Complex, Coordinator's Site
Muntinlupa City
Telephone No. 851-6311 to 07
http://www.dswd.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
Supply and Delivery of One (1) unit All-Seater Air-con Bus (RA 632 No. EOPF/09-CSWD-023)
Second Bidding

1. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), through GAA/CY2009-0-06-070-000-117 Funds intends to apply the sum of **Four Million Pesos (PhP4,000,000.00)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to defray the cost of the project. The project is the **"Supply and Delivery of One (1) unit All-Seater Air-Con Bus"** with RA632 No. EOPF/09-CSWD-023 and bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the opening.
2. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the supply and delivery of new Truck 10-wheeler or its equivalent. Only bids from eligible Bidder is considered in Section 5 of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using a non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (Part 2, GPPB-IRR Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184) (Bidding) known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act" and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines and to Filipino or organizations of the country, the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Executive Order (EO) 245 (A. 1995) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The criterion for the eligibility check is found in Section 5 of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall undergo to the post qualification stage in order to determine the compliance of the bid to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post qualification process.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from **DSWD BAC Secretariat** and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
5. **A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders** from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of One Thousand Pesos (PhP1,000.00) starting April 8 until April 15, 2009. The Bidding Documents may be downloaded successfully by the prospective Bidder to be submitted representative.
6. A Pre-bid Conference, open to all interested bidders, is scheduled on **April 17, 2009 at 11:00 a.m.**, to be held at the Administrative Conference Room (2nd Floor).
7. **Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 11:00 a.m. on May 4, 2009.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of cash, or manager's check, or cashier's check in the amount of at least one percent (1%) of the ABC or equivalent to at least Forty Thousand Pesos (PhP40,000.00). Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. **Bid opening shall be on May 4, 2009 at 11:00 a.m. at Administrative Conference Room, 1st Floor (2nd Building).** Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representative who choose to attend at the address below.
9. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time, prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

BAC CHAIRPERSON:
DSWD Bids and Awards Committee
(2nd BAC Secretariat)
3rd Floor, DSWD-CSB Building,
National Penitentiary Complex, Quezon City
Mailing Address: 2811-1118
Telephone No. 851-6311 local 117

(Sgd.) FLORETA R. VILLAR
Assistant Secretary and
Bids and Awards Committee Chairperson

(PNA April 6, 2009)

Philippine Economic Zone Authority
Bataan Economic Zone

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Philippine Economic Zone Authority and Bataan Economic Zone (BEZ), through the General Budget for the FY 2009 intends to use the sum of Php **[illegible]** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payment of the cost of the Project. The Project is **[illegible]** with Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid No. **[illegible]** and bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the opening.
2. The following [illegible] now invites sealed Bids from Eligible Bidders for the above listed contract.

Quantity	Unit	Description
1	unit	Fabrication, hardening, SS 316L plate machine type, plate shape [illegible] thickness 1.5 mm, 2 mm, 3 mm, 4 mm, 5 mm, 6 mm, 8 mm, 10 mm, 12 mm, 14 mm, 16 mm, 18 mm, 20 mm, 22 mm, 24 mm, 26 mm, 28 mm, 30 mm, 32 mm, 34 mm, 36 mm, 38 mm, 40 mm, 42 mm, 44 mm,

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

The watchtowers of La Union's past

By Yolanda Sarmiento
San Fernando City

PICTURE A SCENARIO ONE LATE AFTERNOON in La Union in the 1600s: A sentry manning a bahanera (watchtower) along the province's coast surveys the sea before him, watching sighs of a suspicious-looking sea vessel moving toward shore. Anxiously, the sentry raises alarm. Church bells toll to signal the arrival of pirates engaged to slave-trading. Residents frantically seek shelter behind the thick walls and closed doors of the town's church.

Fast forward to 2009.

The Juliet's in San Fernando City a small town known as Poblacion during the Spanish regime, is now a ghost of its previous. The stairs and landing inside the watchtower are gone and trees have grown around it, threatening to crack its thick walls.

But the structure persists to survive time and the elements, standing proud despite modernization all around.

Former San Fernando City Mayor Mary Jane Ortega says the watchtowers in the different towns of La Union were built by the Spaniards about 400 years ago. The structures were made of adobe and coral blocks held together by lime and egg whites.

It was in 1572 when the Spaniards started the colonization of the Ilocos and the surrounding areas in the northern part of the country.

"But every summer, pirates would come to get young girls and women, so the Spaniards put up the watchtowers to serve as lookouts against the marauding sea pirates," Ortega says.

Some historical accounts, however, also mentioned Chinese pirates raiding the coastal towns of the Ilocos.

"The land to be about two meters higher," Ortega says of the watchtower to the village of Catbalan, citing research on the original design.

"Through the years, the sea swelled and waterline reached the tower's base, prompting the landowner, Esperanza Rillera, 83, to build a sea wall and to cover the area with two-meter high concrete.

'Just a jungle'

Rillera and her late husband acquired the land in 1964. She describes the area then as a "jungle" and the watchtower "just a hollow structure with no stairs."

"We just left it as it was, we did not touch it for many years. Even if we wanted to, it would have been difficult to climb on it," she says.

Rillera says the area witnessed the fighting between American and Japanese soldiers during World War II. The watchtower survived the battle, she says.

In the 1970s, Rillera and her husband put up the Cat-Villa, a venue for wedding and other parties. Finally, the couple found use for the bahanera and built a "honeymoon suite" inside it for newly wed couples.

"Some couples were hesitant to go to hotels after their wedding. Thinking that sleeping there could be second, so we thought of putting a room inside the structure," she says.

The Rillera built a concrete stairway outside the tower and a bedroom with bathroom in the middle of the structure. The tower's top was also granted with concrete, giving patrons a comfortable spot to view the sea.

Gone

But the honeymoon suite is now gone after termites destroyed its beams.

Rillera has since donated the watchtower to the city government and is also set to donate the two-meter area surrounding the structure.

Ortega says a cultural group in La Union, which she heads, is working for the restoration of the watchtowers in Catbalan and in Luna town.

"We asked for funds from the development fund of Ex-Union Rep. Victor Ortega (her husband), and P500,000 has been allotted for the restoration of the Cat-Villa watchtower," she says.

Ortega has engaged the services of Mestre Manila-based architects with expertise in architectural restoration to oversee the watchtower to its original design.

For instance, the chairs inside the watchtower has landings with windows from which the sentries can scan the sea.

"We will leave the stairs as it is now and, next we will remove the stairs outside," Ortega says.

She says the watchtower in the town of Luna, formerly called Namaropan, has a sad history.

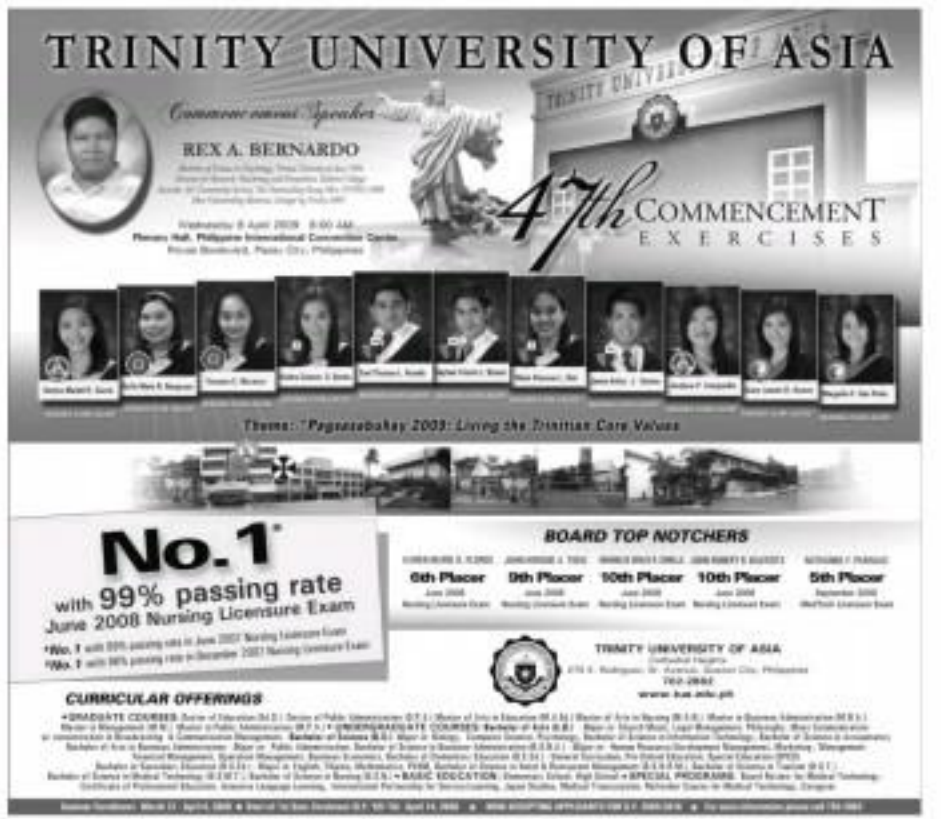
Someone has reached its foundation and it is now cracked. Ortega says she received suggestions to dismantle the watchtower and relocate it before a strong typhoon knocks it down.

"But it will lose its historical significance," she says. "The other solution is to reinforce it strongly and high enough to protect it, but that would be very expensive."

Ortega says watchtowers identical to those in the towns of Balaoan, Bacnotan and San Juan, but these are now in private lots.

Spanish-era watchtowers can also be found in the beaches of Sinait, Ilocos Sur, and Bolinao, Pangasinan, but Ortega says she is encouraging the natives' resolve to defend themselves and their towns from pirates.

ENTRANCE to a watchtower in San Fernando City, La Union



Across the NATION

Gov't sees 500,000 jobs in Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WERE projecting at least 500,000 new jobs in two regions, three provinces and a city in Mindanao this year.

According to a report made by Shelly Cruz, trade and industry undersecretary, business process outsourcing companies (BPOs) and tourism in Mindanao were likely to bring in a combined revenue of more than $100 million by the end of 2009.

A copy of her report was obtained by Inquirer.

Cruz said in her report that the target for the BPO service alone was already more than $7 million.

In 2008, Cruz said BPOs raised in close to $6 million.

Aside from the projected increase in revenues, Cruz said BPOs were also expected to produce about 300,000 jobs in the Socsksargen Region in Muslim Mindanao; South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos City, and in southern Mindanao.

As for the tourism industry, Cruz said the DTI has projected that its income would reach $0.5 million.

She said it was not remote because last year, income from tourism-related businesses was at $0.3 million in Mindanao alone.

Cruz said the expected increase in tourism revenues was due to the government's active push to make Mindanao a medical tourism area.

"The government targets to enhance the medical and wellness facilities in Mindanao in a bid to make it the medical and wellness tourism destination in Asia," she said.

Cruz said the government, through the Department of Tourism, also endorsed the P9 billion package for tourism projects, which includes hotels, resorts and spa, and medical centers to improve what the island can offer.

Aside from BPOs and tourism-related ventures, Cruz said they also increased their projection for other sectors.

She said the projected increase for the processed food industry is about $2 million by the end of the year.

Cruz said among the export synergies they have considered is banana-tapioca wax market diversification, which would entail a review of provisions in the Brunei Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines-East Asia Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), and the Middle East markets.

She said the government, with the cooperation of the private sector, will also enhance product positioning of halal products through the Halal Certification Board.

"Others efforts include the Export Pathways Program and the Regional Innovation Platform for Philippine Exporters (Ripples), both of which are support measures to facilitate exporters," she said.

The administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo has launched a program to cushion the effects of the global recession on migrant workers and workers in the manufacturing sector.

Aside from generating more jobs through infrastructure spending, the government has offered training for new skills for overseas Filipino workers who were unsuccessful bear their foreign jobs as a result of the recession.

Jose Salonga, Albay governor and one of Ms Arroyo's economic advisers, said the government has to do more, have even, at the worst, it yet to come in terms of unemployment.

He said the government need to spend more on a stimulus package he wrothers. Rhadlene Arao, Inquirer Mindanao

AFP probes report of sex workers for US servicemen

LEGAZPI CITY—THE ARMED Forces of the Philippines said it was investigating allegations that prostitutes were being delivered nightly to US servicemen taking part in military exercises in the Bicol region but was quick to deny it.

Lt. Col. Ernesto L. Abcede Jr., public information officer of the 9th ID Bulakbaan command, said Monday that he was saddened by the report alleging that eight to 10 women were being delivered every night to hotels to have sex with the Americans.

He said he took the issue seriously and had called on his US counterparts after the story came out on the Internet's front page.

"We have an ongoing joint investigation on the allegations and I have coordinated with US Balikatan public information officer Lt. Col. Mike Montgomery," to coordinate said.

He said Montgomery had assured him that the Americans were respecting Filipino sensibilities.

"It is true that there were some tourists billeted in various hotels in Legazpi City due to the ongoing Balikatan Bicol but it could be a case of mistaken identity and the Balikatan servicemen were assured proprietor," he added.

Tourism, earlier than the US servicemen, might be the targets of the Bicol trade but the Balikatan teams were not involved, he said.

Showindao said the servicemen were tightly guarded both by security women and in compliance with the Balikatan rules on modern hours.

"If Senator Francis Pangilinan insists on a Senate inquiry," Abcede said, "the AFP is willing to attend and shed light on the matter."

He said Balikatan participants were busy on various infrastructure and disastrous projects. Roy M. Stead, Inquirer Southern Luzon

A BOY takes a closer look at an American soldier unloading equipment at the Tabaco Port in his another Balikatan. Officials are taking no chance a look at allegations commercial sex workers were being delivered to the Americans. KIM LUCAS/LEGAZPI CITY PHOTO CLUB

1,000 LGUs go 'full blast' against red tape

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The 1,489 local government units (LGUs) and agencies with frontline services are working "full blast" to comply with certain provisions in the Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007 (Republic Act 9485), which aims to stop graft at the local level.

The LGUs have until June 2009 to finish their "client's charter," a covenant of service standards between local governments and their clients, Civil Service Assistant Commissioner Annie Mamigonan de Lima said here on Tuesday.

De Lima attended the launch here of the "Fernandino's Charter."

A manual of more than 300 pages, the San Fernando charter describes the step-by-step procedures and the number of hours or minutes through which a resident can get permits and or assistance for regulatory basic, administrative and support services.

It also contains, among other things, a directory of local and regional government agencies.

Mayor Oscar Rodriguez said the manual is user-friendly.

De Lima said RA 9485 set that working days for simple transactions and 10 working days for complex transactions.

In San Fernando, the removal of permits taken from a minimum of two hours to a maximum of two days, Rodriguez said.

"In short, [the charter] makes us more efficient and responsive, and the delivery of our services faster than usual," he said.

De Lima said any violations in the charter will make local government or employees liable for criminal and administrative charges.

She said violators can face up to six years in prison or P200,000 in fine. They can also be dismissed and disqualified from public service.

"When the clients know the steps, there would be no more need for fixers," she said.

De Lima said the city government in Pampanga's capital was the first to launch its citizen's charter in Central Luzon.

The Department of the Interior and Local Government works with the Civil Service Commission in the project Core Competencies and Unified Response to Eliminate Red Tape), which is done as part of the law.

San Fernando is a Unlad Pook awardee in governance. It is one of seven cities enrolled in the Seoul Urin program of the Institute for Solidarity to Asia.

Almost all LGUs have undergone orientation workshops on RA 9485. "They're trying to roll out the processes that are already in place and are refining these," De Lima said.

The training came after the CSC completed the law's implementing rules and regulations in August 2008. Ernie De Jesus, Inquirer Central Luzon

Negros Occidental execs seize ₱18M in GMO corn

By Carlo P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—THE PROvincial government seized last Saturday P18 million worth of corn seeds found to be genetically modified, Negros Occidental Gov. Isidro Zayco said on Monday.

Zayco said the provincial government has ordered the corn seeds to be held at a warehouse at the port of the Bacolod Food Estate Development Corp. (Bredeco) in Bacolod City.

A Cebu-based firm, the provincial government gave the order to seize 15,746 bags, or 750 tons, of genetically modified corn seeds worth P18 million that were shipped by Bounty Fresh Foods from La Union and Ilocos to Negros consignee Bounty Agro Ventures, Zayco said.

The seeds were subjected to testing and found to be positive for genetically modified organisms (GMO) in violation of Provincial Ordinance 007 Series of 2003, he said.

Provincial Ordinance No. 07 Series of 2003 banned the entry of genetically modified plants and animals into Negros Occidental, the governor said.

The ordinance explained that the ban on GMO products was aimed at "eradicating the genetic menace" and "protecting the preservation of biodiversity and sustenance of the status of Negros as an Organic Food Island in Asia."

The seeds were kept at the Agro Ventures warehouse at the reclamation area in Bacolod City with orders for them not to be released, Zayco said.

A dialogue with the owner of the seeds will be held, he added.

In March, the provincial government directed the release of 994 metric tons of corn grains that arrived at the Bredeco port from General Santos City that were held for lack of a National Food Authority (NFA) shipping permit. Engr. Occidental provincial agriculturist Ignacio Tabiano said.

The corn shipment turned out not to be genetically modified and was released to the Negros Occidental market after the shipper was fined for failing to acquire an NFA shipping permit, Tabiano added.

Protests greeted the introduction of GMOs into the country, with groups saying GMOs could contaminate the country's food supply with chemicals that could taint hotness.

GMO advocates, however, defended the genetic modification of food, saying it was through this technology that scientists and manufacturers could keep the supply of food going.

Critics of GMOs have referred to the types of food as "Frankenfood," referring to the fictional monster that was created by Dr. Victor Frankenstein.

Kids tapped to preserve Moriones tradition

BOAC, MARINDUQUE—A newly organized moriones group in this province has started a program that may never done before—train children to preserve the century-old tradition of the Moriones.

In this year's Holy Week festival, children wearing moriones costumes caught the attention of the crowd, as they marched as a group during the Lenten procession of the Monion and Santacruzan on Holy Monday.

George Olympia, president of the Legion of the Marinduque Moriones (LMM), said his group tapped children as members because elders assumed to instill among the youth the importance of preserving the province's moriones tradition.

Thousand by Oriental Mindoro's Centurions Festival, the LMM, according to Olympia, believes in the importance of teaching and involving children to preserve and enrich the annual tradition which originated from this province.

The Moriones Festival originated in the northern Marinduque town of Mogpog in the 1600s when a re-enactment of the resurrection was staged by a road priest, Dimas de Santiago.

The part where Longinus, a Roman centurion, was said to have become an instant believer after thrusting a spear into Jesus' side during the crucifixion was played one for the first time there.

Hence, the message of faith and conversion that the Moriones Festival brings found a niche in the heart of the Marinduqueño.

Olympia said his group teached children to wear the Moriones mask and costumes, not for pleasure, but in a means of preserving the province's tradition.

"They are too young to understand what penance is. Penance involves physical and emotional hardships and these children," said Olympia.

In Marinduque, an individual becomes a Morion as a vow of penance or atone for sins.

It is also believed that becoming a Morion ensures good health, or helps the devotee recover from illness and keeps him out of danger. Among Filipinos and Fobreigners, it brings good harvest and boon. Ethel Gonzales, Inquirer Southern Luzon

THE LEGIONS of the Marinduque Moriones cage children as members to instill in them the importance of preserving the province's moriones tradition. MARK JOSEPH QUIAMBAO/PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Puno moral force in place; core group convened

From page A1

...op Emesto Pascual, Retired Sen. Jamby Madrigal, president of the Association of Generals and Flag Officers Inc., former Finance Undersecretary Mitzie Guevarra, the Eastern University law dean Andres Bautista, and the Outstanding Students of the Philippines 2008 awardee Rommel Saludaga.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone chair Manuel V. Pangilinan was among those considered to join, but Marquez said that Pangilinan wanted certain issues first clarified. He said the business tycoon supports the movement.

"In essence, they are focusing on the 2010 elections and trying to define what a transformational leader is," Marquez said.

Puno earlier told law students that transformational leaders inform interests to transcend self-interest for the sake of the organization or the greater whole as against "transactional leaders" who motivate followers by appealing to self-interest.

Moral parish

Marquez's announcement came a day after Puno, as the United Methodist Church in Manila's branch of its oversized laity movement, said the Philippines has become a "moral parish" in the conviviality of nation because of widespread corruption.

Puno said that the country was a "social volcano about to explode."

"He would like to choose and have elected transformational leaders from the highest post to the lowest post being contested in the forthcoming 2010 elections and the recent State movement would also like to unite all similarly minded organizations," Marquez said.

He said that the core group is in two meetings was briefed by Jesuit experts and has decided to focus on defining leaders that would bring about transformation to the country.

"It will not be endorsing any specific candidates. It will only give the qualities of the candidates that we need to be elected," Marquez said.

He said that a technical working group of volunteers has been formed to assist the movement.

"The core group will again meet after Holy Week to harmonize meetings, a list of assignments are being given to the technical working group," Marquez said.

Advocacy vs corruption

Marquez said the movement is Puno's personal advocacy against corruption. "This is to express only a personal crusade of the Chief Justice. It does not involve the court in whatever manners," he said.

"The judiciary is as much as possible being shielded from this," he said. Once the movement is in full operation, Marquez said Puno plans to step aside.

He said the group would have to launch campaigns in May, a year before the 2010 elections.

"We don't want it to be identified with the administration nor do we want any of the members identified with the opposition or supportive of either group," Marquez said.

"He it was really not very easy to get a registered member of the business community who is not affiliated one way or the other," he said.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita welcomed the movements.

"That serves as a wake-up call for many especially those serving in government. That's how we should look at it. We can't say we're all clean," he told reporters at the Mt. Samat Shrine in Bataan.

Ermita, however, said that moving out corruption was part of the program of President Macapagal-Arroyo, who has ruled for more than eight years since January 2001.

"All leaders of countries would like to rule under a program of morality," he said.

Ermita also said that it wasn't surprising that Puno made such a call, pointing out that having risen through the ranks of the judiciary he was "aware of the causes of anomalies."

Touchy issue

"Chief Justice Puno knows what to do, and knows why our morality has slipped because of the crimes he has witnessed," he said.

Corruption has been a touchy issue in the Arroyo administration, which has been rocked by a string of scandals since 2005. With a report from TJ Burgonio

PRAYING FOR 2010 Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato Puno (center in dark suit) convenes the moral force movement with its core group members on Tuesday. A technical working group of volunteers has also been formed.

HENRIETTA DE VILLA, chair of the Parish Pro-life Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting

JAIME ECHEVARRIA, president of the Association of Generals and Flag Officers

MILWIDA GUEVARRA, ex-finance undersecretary

ANDRES BAUTISTA, dean of Far Eastern University College of Law

Profiles of six members

HENRIETTA DE VILLA, former ambassador to the Holy See, was elected chair of the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections in October 2008, replacing long-time Namfrel head Jose Concepcion. She also heads PPCRV, accredited by the Commission on Elections as a partner in the ongoing voters' registration for the 2010 elections.

MSGR. EDWARDO SANTOS is also president of the Catholic Education Association of the Philippines, which has over 1,000 members. CEAP recently forged an agreement with Namfrel and PPCRV to push for clean and honest elections in 2010.

MILWIDA GUEVARRA was finance undersecretary during the Ramos administration. She was the recipient of the 2nd Samuel Hayden Vista Sr. Outstanding Leadership and Public Service in 2008. She now heads Synergists Foundation, Inc., a coalition of individuals, institutions and organizations working to improve basic education.

ANDRES BAUTISTA received his law degree from Mariano de Manila University in 1980 and earned his masters from Harvard University three years later. He is a member of the Consultative Commission on Charter Change and also the Ejercito Estrada Committee for nominations to the Supreme Court. He is currently president of Ilustang Properties Inc.

Retired GEN. JAIME ECHEVARRIA graduated from the Philippine Military Academy in 1962 and pursued further studies in the University of the Philippines and in Madrid, Spain. He serves as vice president for military affairs of the Philippine Constitution Association.

Lawyer JOSE MARIA PRICE was named Outstanding Rotarian by Assumption College in 2003. A member of the board of trustees of the Philippine Business for Social Progress, she was a former member of the De La Salle University Board of Trustees. Compiled by Inquirer Research

Presidential chopper, GMA aides missing

From page A1

Pasanes, undersecretary for presidential engagement; Brig. Gen. Carlos Gir, senior military aide of the Arroyo; his aide, Asst. Director Pearly Bandayanon; and Sgt. Denny Bravo of the Presidential Security Group.

They were bound for Bacoor in nearby Cavite province to conduct an ocular inspection ahead of Ms. Arroyo's inspection of the Daang Hari-SLEX Highway in the area today, Bernardo said.

The pilot was only identified as Major Encarnel and his copilot, Capt. Gabriel Rivera.

"The President was shaken by this development. But we still hope for the best ... that the chopper just landed safely in an area where there is no cell phone service," Bernardo said over government-run Radyo ng Bayan.

Bernardo said that before the helicopter were missing, a staff of Malacañang's Media Accreditation Office (Mao) received a call from Capt. Rivera at around 3 p.m. saying they were looking for an area to land because of poor visibility.

The helicopter was last found hovering over Bagna in Bongabon, Bernardo said.

Bernardo said the Air force, Army, police and Cavite provincial officials in the area have been mobilized for search and rescue operations.

"All rescue operations of agencies are already being mobilized to look for them. Army and police units have been mobilized. Rescue operations are also involved in the search and rescue operations. Air force is already also mobilized," he said.

Senior Supt. Danny Pelino, Bongabon provincial police director, said the flight would normally take only 20 minutes.

Pelino said they have not yet established contact with the helicopter or determine if the aircraft had made an emergency landing somewhere in the towns of Bokod or Kapangan in Benguet, or even in Ifugao province.

There were unconfirmed reports that the helicopter made a crash landing and was sighted somewhere between Ambagiuis in Nueva Vizcaya and Tinoc in Ifugao province. A Santiago resident from Nueva Vizcaya has been sent to the area.

Pelino said police and the Army presumed had tried but failed to contact the mobile phones of the helicopter's passengers. He confirmed there were "dead spots" in the province where cellular mobile services signals are available.

Although weather conditions in Cavitex were good, Pelino said other areas in Bigan and Benguet could have been cloudy and possibly forced the helicopter to "land somewhere." With reports from Ana Guanzon, Liva Subangdin-Fernandez, Abigail Kwok of Inquirer.net

RP Reds acclaim Nokor rocket launch

From page A1

pines (CPP) said the launch "shows the technological advances achieved by the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) in its perseverance at defending itself and building socialism."

The party, which leads the 5,200-member New People's Army, said Pyongyang "is poised to break the imperialist monopoly in global media information.

"Not only would it be able to use this as a platform to counter the imperialist lies against the DPRK, but also facilitate its use by other oppressed nations and peoples to show the world their real situation and to propagate their calls and fight against the evils of imperialism."

Pyongyang defied international appeals on Sunday by launching a long-range rocket that it said had placed a communications satellite into orbit.

South Korea and the US military said no satellite ever made it into space. South Korea, the United States and Japan have said the launch was a pretext to test a long-range Taepodong-2 missile in violation of UN resolutions.

The Philippine government itself has not publicly reacted to the launch. AFP

Unsafe buildings main killers in Italy quake

From page A1

quake in the Apennine region of Abruzzo, geologists and civil engineers attributed most of the blame for damage on inadequate buildings.

Rescuers working with hands

"The collapses that occurred in Abruzzo involved houses that weren't built to withstand a quake that wasn't particularly violent," said Enzo Boschi, president of the National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology. Initial estimates put the quake's preliminary magnitude at 5.8, while the US Geological Survey recorded it as 6.3.

"We got all worked up after every earthquake, but it's not in our culture to construct buildings the right way in a quake zone—that is, build buildings that are flexible (tanker) and resist the stress. This has never been done," Boschi said.

Rescuers worked frantically early Tuesday digging piles of rubble with their hands in the search for survivors of the country's deadliest earthquake in more than three decades. Killed in at least 179 people and injured 1,500. More than 70 people were still missing. Firefighters said they had pulled 300 people alive from rubble in the area.

Tens of thousands of people left homeless by the quake slept in makeshift tents that provided little protection against the chilly mountain air, unsure of survivors lived up early Tuesday for a list cup of coffee.

Evidence of shortcuted lives

Workers dug through the night under powerful lights even as aftershocks continued to spook residents. Surrounding piles of rubble contained evidence of shortcuted lives: torn clothing, ripped stuffed animals and broken furniture.

"All of a sudden I heard a boom, and all the books and notebooks fell down," said Lucia Berta, a 57-year-old resident who rushed out of her third-floor apartment wearing only her pajamas. "I saw the walls shake, and the table moved by itself."

The quake hit 28 towns and cities around Dupida, which has in a valley surrounded by the Apennine mountains. The nearby village of Onna was nearly leveled, with 38 people out of some 350 inhabitants dead, rescue officials said.

Franco Barberi, a leading geologist and disaster expert, in-

COLLAPSED DOME Cathedral is damaged in the center of Dupida following an earthquake measuring 5.8 magnitude on the Richter scale. Stones from the baroque church tumbled down. It had been rebuilt after a 1703 quake.

DOOMED VILLAGE Rescue workers survey the destruction in Onna village. They used mechanical diggers and their bare hands to search through the night — Tuesday for survivors in Italy's worst quake in three decades.

pected devastation as Italy's lack of protection for buildings in earthquake territory.

"What makes one angry is, if this happened in California or in Japan or some other country where for some time they have been practicing anti-seismic protection, it would probably 'wouldn't have caused a single death," Barberi said on state television.

Builders skimped on materials

Giorgio Croci, a Rome-based engineer and expert on ancient monuments like the Colosseum in the Italian capital, singled out building methods as a key factor in Dupida's damage.

Ancient Romans used high-quality mortar and stone to put up monuments and buildings that have lasted some 2,000 years, and Byzantine-style structures often boasted high-quality quarried stone and proper proportions, he said.

Builders in the impoverished medieval era, however, often skimped on the quality of materials and generally resorted less massive buildings, he said. As a result, medieval structures are more likely to sustain substantial damage in a quake.

"If you live in an ancient building, you have to employ a policy of prevention," Croci said.

"You can improve such buildings," such as by adding chains to connect walls horizontally and limit their bouncing in a quake, he said. "Chains don't cost that much." Another technique is to use iron hooks to bind wooden beams to walls, he said.

Half of Italy 'dangerous'

Nearly half of Italy's territory is considered "dangerous" in terms of seismic activity, according to a 2006 report by Boschi and other Italian geologists and civil protection experts. But only 14 percent of buildings to date vulnerable earthquakes, modern buildings in Italy—nondescript apartment houses and public buildings—often don't meet current standards to withstand safety.

Public works contractors, especially in Italy's south, are vulnerable to infiltration by organized crime, prosecutors say. Builders often don't use the best materials, being pressured by racketeers to rely on suppliers close to organized crime.

Only a few weeks ago, there rang out in a southern Italian construction where judges convicted five people in the 2002 collapse of a school in a L-A magnitude quake. Prosecutors alleged shoddy construction was a factor in the tragedy which claimed 28 lives, including the small town's entire first grade.

The UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction said Monday that "buildings are the main killers when earthquakes strike." The UN noted that many of the old structures in L'Aquila did not meet modern seismic standards.

Toll on architectural heritage

Officials said some 10,000 to 20,000 buildings were either damaged or destroyed Monday, and at least 50,000 people were left homeless.

Italy's national police chief Antonio Manganelli said several people had been arrested for looting abandoned homes.

The quake also took a severe toll on Dupida's prized architectural heritage. Many Renaissance, Gothic, Baroque and Renaissance buildings were damaged, including part of the red-and-white stone facades of Santa Maria di Collemaggio.

The bell tower of the 16th-century San Bernardino church and the cupola of the Baroque San Agostino church also fell, the Culture Ministry said. Restoration teams from the city's cathedral, which was rebuilt after a 1703 earthquake.

Also in Rome

Damage to monuments was reported as far away as Rome, where cracks appeared on the Baroque facade built in the 3rd century by the emperor Caracalla, Culture Ministry official Giuseppe Proietti said.

Premier Silvio Berlusconi declared a state of emergency, freeing up millions in euros to deal with the crisis.

The pope, who is 81, ruled out a visit to Rome on health grounds.

The last time Italy's deadliest quake since Nov. 23, 1980, when a 6.9-magnitude quake hit southern regions, leveling villages and causing some 3,000 deaths. AP

Editor Teddyboy V. Melendrez • Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Cebrian

SPORTS

King's Cup: Nietes stuns Russian fighter

TEPCHAI: Dreadlamp

THEMAGNIFICENT MICRO-DRIVER A NITE (flashwings) to one Russia's Alexander Ivanuykov, 7-3, Monday night and reach the light flyweight semifinals of the 31st King's Cup boxing tournament in Bangkok.

With the victory, the 19-year-old Nietes assured the country of a second bronze medal and set up a semifinal duel with Southeast Asian Games medalist Rawee Wongpimoon of host Thailand at the Soumaya sports Hall.

Light welterweight Gerdoni Rundes was to face Russia's Dmitri Arseshkin for a place in the gold medal match on Wednesday.

Toughened by a stint in the World Youth Championships and training in Havana, Cuba, Nietes, cousin of world minimumweight champion, Donnie, flashed the form that belied his youth in scoring one of the tournament's biggest upsets.

But it was the rest of the line for bronzes, tonight: Jone Tipon, lightweight; Joegin Ladon and featherweight Charlie Suarez, who lost to Thai Dhanesh Muthikhat, 14-6, on Monday.

Ladon also bowed out Monday night, but not before piling the country with a bronze. He bested Azizagekh Mustaybaqunov of Turkmenistan, 15-5, and clinched his place in the semifinals against Thai Archarjet Hoowmuan.

But Bb Bago City-born fighter was forced to pull out of the tournament due to a nasty cut under the right eye. The cut was caused by an errant elbow from Hadarbegunov.

Tournament officials actually gave Ladon the go-signal to fight but was told PF delegation head and national amateur boxing association director Ed Picson feel the ad might worsen.

"I didn't think it was worth it," said Picson. "His injury would further him in future fights. Precaution got the better part of valor here."

Tipon continued his slump following his dramatic 2008 Asian Games triumph in Doha as he bowed to Thai Chartchai Bonkor, 11-5.

"I was pressured and when I fell behind I became I felt he was not throwing scoring punches," the 26-year-old Tipon said. —Cedelf B. Tupas

Qatar wanted RP five to play in its series

IN HUDDLE

DAVID CAUDAL

SHELLBALL USA-

ed on the local opening scene through the Asian Games, Blues bisexual Chris Tiu and Fil-Am rookie Jayson Castro are ready to keep fans happy—except that the PBA will change its mind and play in the Qatar tourney series, instead of the Stoke Jones-sponsored Asian-wide Basketball Championship.

Qatar was accepted from the 16 team schedule.

The tournament date was originally set for April 17 to 26 but when we were advised that the Stoke Crackers Asian Basketball Association was going to be moved to two rounds, we moved the series to July.

Unfortunately, the PBA felt that the Asian Cup in Tipico would provide a better venue for our RP team."

Qatar has been scrapped

Farewell to Leo Prieto, father of the PBA

By Francis T.J. Ochoa

SAN JUAN CITY, THE "FOOTBALLER BY HEART" who made one of the biggest impacts in local sports as the Philippine Basketball Association's founding commissioner, passed away yesterday after years due to lingering illness.

He was 88.

Prieto suffered a stroke two weeks ago and never recovered. His remains were entrusted last night and will be brought to the the Capilla San Francisco at Forbes Park. Interment will be on Thursday, 10 a.m.

Prieto, who donated every sentence of his commissioner's salary to a football organization that provided the needy players, is best remembered for steering the PBA through its initial stages. The sage like Prieto served as PBA chief from 1975 to 1982.

"He was a great, great man," said grand slam coach and retired sportscaster Tommy Manotoc. "His integrity was beyond question."

"No one was able to handle the egos of the people involved in the league like he did," added Manotoc, who was the league's representative for U/Tex when Prieto was commissioner.

A consummate sportsman, Prieto also was a

PRIETO

name without the PBA."

"I had the good fortune of working with good people," he said.

Prieto continued to watch the PBA games until about two years ago, despite having to walk with a cane and being accompanied by a nurse.

But for all his involvement in basketball, he would always tell sportswriters during casual dinners that he was a "footballer by heart."

Prieto had described the PBA commissioner as someone who "must have a good grasp of the game" and someone "who the board can trust and respect."

president of the Manila Jockey Club. He was coach of the Philippine team to the Melbourne Olympics in 1956, and mentioned the famed 5000 Steeples, which he lost to seven straight national titles.

After stepping down in 1982, Prieto declared that "all he would. "Just for the

All Stars test RP 5

Past, present Nationals square off

JAMES JUDGE (Joanne Calderon)
4 p.m.—Rocky el Gran Cielo
5:30 p.m.—San Miguel vs Rain or Shine

By Manong R. Castillo

MANSE THIS TIME, POWERADE Team Pilipinas will get the workout that it needs.

PBA fans voted starters for two All-Star teams that will play the Nationals in a three-game series in two weeks with four former RP squad members leading the lineups.

Mare Pingris and Lordy Tigerde of San Miguel, ex-RP team member Enrico Villanueva of Purefoods, Paul Israel of Barangay Ginebra and Mike Cardona of Talk 'N Text earned starting roles for the Month team which will test the Nationals five times till the Finals.

The Fiesta Cup takes a lull starting on April 20 for this gig, which will see the Nationals take on three teams in another series of exhibition games.

An Australian selection are due

HONTIVEROS

SINGLE

ALAPAG

against the Nationals last Friday and only the reinforcements of Titan Pinoy of Talk 'N Text and Shawn Daniels of Burger King prevented them from playing two respectable games.

San Miguel's Danny Seigle and Dondon Hontiveros, Eric Menk of Barangay Ginebra and Talk 'N Text point guard Jimmy Alapag, all members of the last PBA-bound RP squad, started starting duty to the South team which takes second seat in the Nationals.

Any Washington of San Miguel is the

fifth ancient for the South.

Those two all-star selections will each get the boost from two injuries with the rest of the members to be named by PBA coaches. RP vs South is scheduled on April 22 in Victorias City before the Nationals plane in to Manila. Dennis del Norte to face the South two days later.

In other news, featuring the starters of both squads will be Team Pilipinas' third tune at the Asaeros Coliseum on April 26.

Jordan leads Hall of Fame inductees

DETROIT—MR. JORDAN HAS A NEW name: Hall of Famer.

Michael Jordan was elected to the class of 2009 on Monday, set for induction Sept. 10-12, with his Dream Team teammates David Robinson and John Stockton, Utah Jazz coach Jerry Sloan and Rutgers women's coach C. Vivian Stringer are also part of a class announced in Detroit.

"I don't like being up here for the Hall of Fame because at this time your basketball career is completely over," Jordan said. "I was hoping this day would be 20 more years, or actually go in when I'm dead and gone."

Jordan's Hall of Fame selection was a

slam dunk after he retired as perhaps the greatest player in history. And he gave much of the credit Monday to his college coach.

"There's no way you guys would have got exclusive to see Michael Jordan play without Dean Smith," he said.

He wearing clunks TV commercials and "Air Jordan" sidecaster helped stamp him as one the most recognizable athletes around the world. He finished a 15-year career with the Chicago Bulls and Washington Wizards with 32,292 points—the third-highest total in league history behind Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Karl Malone. He first retired over-age of 30-1/2 gone down on the older Jazz.

"Simply the greatest to ever play the game of basketball," Jordan's former Bulls teammate and now boss GM, John Paxson said.

Jordan was a five-time NBA MVP and won six championships with the Bulls.

On Monday, he joked that when he saw Stockton and Robinson he was ready to put his shorts on again.

"I always want to be able to have you thinking I can always go back and play the game of basketball and put your shorts on," Jordan said. "Hall of Fame is not to like, OK, it's over and done with."

Jordan rates one of his titles in the 1990s against Shaq, Stockton and the Jazz. AP

Sports and politics not a good mix

IT APPEARS SO BE A CRIME in our political landscape that the President determines who will run the government sports programs. There's nothing wrong in her choice in the sports and sports are connected, and the interests of our national athletes should be unrestricted and foremost—take the budget.

We already lash out at some sports as overt international ally and the more they lose the politicians grip every now and then while heading promotions and the national sports agencies should help my cause efforts.

We have all seen how lose some of our favorite sports have made, some temporarily. We can people who lead them were are losing sessions impossible.

Some of these national sports associations were headed by basketball, sportsmen people who did not prioritize athletes.

The bickering between the Philippine Olympic Committee and the Philippine Sports Commission has POC chair Jinggoy Ejercito, making his presence felt, leading heavy-ads with the POC leadership.

To me, this is a clear case of politics causing wide spaces. Jinggoy, after all, is a president and spokesman.

Reading reports about this dialogue gives me the feeling that nothing good will come out of it. And the national athletes will be the only big losers in the end.

Jinggoy, as POC chief, has the capacity to wrest a program that has been ready in place for the past several years and one which does not involve disturbed constituency that the handsome Asian Games are just a few months away.

We, Mikkeyboy has a powerful arrow to pick Jinggoy. Sad, though, that he's not in charge known in the last leg of the election. Williams "Butch" Ramirez may have had his shortcomings while he was still PSC chair, but he

HEART, SOUL, SPORTS
BENNETT Manotoc

didn't do a bad job. And he didn't rock the boat.

* * *

I sincerely believe that political relations in sports should and will never have no place in the sports landscape. The only thing the majority of them want is to be seen in the newspapers. Many of us use sports as a stepping stone to get to where they ultimately want to be.

The chairman Prejoy Gimeng Alay was successful because Michael Jordan didn't have political ambitions at that time. Me me Gimeng Alay with the sole purpose of giving glory to the country.

We need sport leaders who are think and implement programs like Jose Oz. Otherwise, we can expect the country to run the dust to the Sara SEA Games in December.

We can also have our Olympic dreams goodbye...save the certain sports which are being run by the private sector. Leadership and empowerment in this time. And there are but a few.

* * *

The PBA-backed Philippine team got a workout they didn't need against an overmatched team from Australia over the weekend.

It was a series of slow and league consumers because our national players didn't get the feel they needed to be able to win people against the best in Asia.

What the PBA Inc-ople now was a bunch of passers led by a four-footer in Bruce Bolden.

Instead of bringing the Australians over the PBA should have sent the RP team on a ready-tough tournament elsewhere, or played it against a team of reserve volunteered by locals who are not members of the national team.

Against a team like that, coach Yeng would have gotten the workout he and his team needed. And it's almost a guarantee that they would have finished more than losing them a team like that.

(email comments to: newsdesk@inq.com)

'The best there ever was. The best there ever will be'

MICHAEL Jordan soars to the rim during the 1988 slam dunk competition. Jordan is famous as much for his competitive spirit as his graceful-defying moves

DETROIT—SEVEN PEOPLE GO into the Hall of Fame. Then they get the nature.

But Michael Jordan, from as he stood in the ballroom of a downtown hotel Monday for the announcement of his selection to the Hall class of 2009, the same sweetness that swirled comic flustered a nurse revered almost 15 years ago in front of the United Center in Chicago—The Bonar That Jordan Built—a five hundred tribute to his youth.

The figure cast in bronze atop a granite base soon to stand the sky of Jordan hall at the end of its entrenched arm.

The pose captures almost perfectly the distinctive Jordan: That he could fly that down near the rafters.

where the statue is affixed to the earth, is an inscription that rapture the reality: "The hero there ever was. The best there ever will be."

What made Jordan that, and more, was not the string of NBA scoring titles, regular season and finals MVP awards, nor even all the championships he won. A few members of the exclusive club he will formally join upon induction into the Hall next September boost accomplishments once in context.

No, the real wonder of Jordan is that he always kept score. Not just in his hand, not just on a basketball court, and not just on the nights, but every minute of every day.

In his front yard, against an older brother on a makeshift court of raked dirt; at North Carolina, where he bonded in a last-second jump shot to win an NCAA championship; in Barcelona, Spain, where he led the Dream Team to a second Olympic gold medal; even arrogating with teammates whose salaries would come down the luggage carousel at the airport first, in Salt Lake City, where one last bear-mugging jumper notched through the net, securing his sixth title and sealing every last bit of an out of the state of Utah.

He is keeping score still.

"This is not fun for me," Jordan said during a brief news conference. "I don't like being up here for the Hall of Fame, because at that time, your basketball career is completely over. That's the way I look at it. I was hoping this day was going to be 20 more years, or that I'd actually go in when I'm dead and gone."

Jordan's role as Air Jordan in the 1990s against Shaq, Stockton and the Jazz. AP

Lopez bags WBC 'international' belt

YOUNG PRETENDER SYLVESTER Lopez demolished Romero mandatory champion Mark Jonathan in the eighth round to win the vacant World Boxing Council (WBC) International super flyweight title last Sunday night at Waters Sports Center in Pasig City.

Lopez caught Mark with a vicious left hook to the body to send the 26-year-old Romero down at 2:16 of the round. It didn't take long for Bruce McTavish to declare the fight over.

The 21-year-old boxer of promoter Gabriel "Bebot" Elorde Jr. was comfortably ahead on three judges' scorecards at the time of stoppage.

Ben Dumaua scored the fight 59-55, Epifanio Almeda saw it 60-54 while the Romero official gave it 57-57 all in favor of Lopez.

Both were down three times

NEWLY-minted World Boxing Council (WBC) International super flyweight champion Sylvester Lopez (fourth from right) smiles while referee Bruce McTavish (fifth from right) and former Kazakhstan-Colombo Vivares (third from right) raise his arms after the bout.

from body shots in the first round, but he fought back and roared giving Lopez problems, particularly in the fourth round.

Lopez improved to 9-2-1 with six knockouts.

JUNIOR GOLF SUMMER CLINICS

The Orchard Junior Summer Clinic
Orchard Golf and Country Club
Dasmariñas, Cavite
April 14 to 18, 2009
Head Professional: Michael Que
Contact #: 883-8344 local 104

Camp Aguinaldo LEGCOM Summer Youth Program
LEGCOM Driving Range
Quezon City
April 13 to May 13, 2009
Head Professional: Danny Sadio
Contact #: +63920 940 0871

Clydell Junior Golf Summer Clinic
Clydell Driving Range
Alabang-Zapote Road
Las Piñas City
April 13 to May 1, 2009
Contact Person: Aaron Tiñay
Contact #: +63919 688 7143

South Point Junior Golf Summer Program
South Point Driving Range
Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa
April 13 to April 26, 2009
Head Professional: Angel Sarmiento
Contact #: +63 (2) 807-1846

Arizona Golf Management and Services Summer Junior Golf Program
Makati Golf Club
Nicanor St., Barangay Bel-Air, Makati City
March 23 to April 24, 2009
Head Professional: Lito Santos / Mike Cudio
Contact #: +63920 921 0171

U.S. Kids Golf

Join the 1st U.S. Kids Golf Master Championship Qualifying Tournament to be held on May 1, 2, 3 at the Orchard Golf and Country Club.
Registration & application forms are available at the Junior Golf Foundation, the Orchard Golf & Country Club and at all U.S. Kids Golf / Super rookies.
Registration starts April 15, 2009

HYUNDAI IS LOOKING AFTER YOU

With temperatures rising to a sweltering 35 degrees, summer is officially here. And as it gets even hotter in the coming days, people are definitely opting to trek off to some place where there's surf and sand, or to breathtaking mountainsides where nature's verdant canopy offers a cool respite from the summer's unforgiving heat. At last, another well-deserved break from the dumping city life—perhaps even from the "heat" of the corporate jungle—and more importantly, a chance to take a meaningful pause to reflect on and renew your relationship with your Creator and your family.

But as you look after your loved ones' safety, making sure that they're happy and well taken care of throughout the trip, who else is looking out for you as you make your way down the open road? Sure, your mere presence can make your family feel secure that they've got someone to depend on to make sure the trip goes smoothly as planned. But for moments when you just need to be doubly sure, who can be counted on doing the way? In times when you need more than just your instinct and good navigational skills to get you on track, there's Hyundai, ever prepared and equipped to look after your travel needs as you drive your way to your favorite summer destinations.

Hyundai's DMRA ready to look after you

If you're planning to take the family out of town to reunite with relatives or celebrations of the Holy Week and Easter, Hyundai's Summer Motorist Roadside Assistance (DMRA) on April 9, 11 and 12 can help make your road trips as worry-free and enjoyable as should be. Now on its 16th year, the Summer Motorist Roadside Assistance is one of the ways that Hyundai aims to keep customers and motorists happy through unparalleled and quality after-sales support that goes exactly where customers need it most—even beyond the usual locations of standard service offerings.

In partnership with Hyundai dealers and Pilipinas Shell, Hyundai Asia Resources, Inc. (HARI), the official distributor of Hyundai vehicles in the Philippines, will treat the motoring public to 95 service points from Benguet to Naga, where Hyundai's expert technicians will always be on alert for any help you might need while traveling. Dedicated to deliver Hyundai's signature Best C.A.R.E., or Constant, Accurate, Reliable, and Efficient and speedy service, Hyundai's on-site technicians and after-sales team at each service point will give assistance to distressed motorists and conduct minor repairs on belts and brakes, suspension parts, aircon system, and overheating problems. There's also free vehicle check-up and estimate of recommended repair jobs, if your car needs any. Plus, you'll even get to see a showcase of the latest models of the Hyundai line. The DMRA makes for more than just an after-sales response; it's a great way to know more about Hyundai cars—and possibly buy a Hyundai car for yourself and your family too!

With all the ways that Hyundai's Summer Motorist Roadside Assistance (DMRA) invites after you and your loved ones, road trips are quite looking forward to, knowing that Hyundai's Best C.A.R.E. is but a short step away, and not other needs.

Have a safe trip

Watch out! Road trips may be fun, but if you're not vigilant, you may miss out the important essentials of a safe and hassle-free journey. Whether you're traveling for a few hours or a few days, it's always best to be prepared. Here are some important tips and reminders to make your summer vacation a safe and pleasurable experience:

- Plan ahead. Make reservations and bookings early for hotels, scenic visits, and the like. Write down a simple itinerary for the trip and keep to it as much as possible to avoid hassles of spur-of-the-moment activities later on.
- Check your car. Before hitting the open road, be sure that your car is in shape for long travels. Have the oil changed and fluids checked if necessary. Have all tires checked and balanced or rotated if required. See if all belts and hoses need replacing, and check your spare tire and jack as well. When inspecting motor levels, have your trusted technician check the radiator cap for proper pressure.
- For Hyundai car owners, have your car regularly serviced at authorized Hyundai dealerships. You'll be glad you did. Always check-ups will come in handy during an all-important trip. You may also call your Hyundai dealer ahead of the scheduled DMRA to alert them that you might be in need of assistance while traveling to your favorite summer getaway.
- Bring a first-aid kit—not just for yourself and your family, but for your car. Sure, you'll pack the first-aid staples like aspirin, bandages, antiseptic, pain relievers, and the like. But your car needs a first-aid kit, too, which includes enough quantity of transmission and power steering fluid, washer fluid, 1 to 2 liters of water (always the seal of a sufficient bottle), safety like inside the cars), a can of brake fluid, some paper towels and rags, a set of proper cables or a jump start power pack.
- Bring a road map. Even the most adept of navigators need one, good for checking out the nearest convenience store, or Shell gasoline station where the Hyundai DMRA team is. As they say, you get by with a little help from friends, or in Hyundai's case, the DMRA team.
- Bring a sufficient supply of drinking water. In this hot weather, you need to be hydrated.
- Pack some nuts and fruits for something healthy to nibble on while on the move.
- Stock up on CDs or bring a portable MP3 player to keep the family entertained with a good dose of music. For the kids, bring along their favorite toys or books, as long as they're handy and safe to play with inside the vehicle.
- If you're bringing the baby along, make sure that the car seat for baby is comfortable and keep the safety belts fastened in place. Don't forget baby's pre-essentials (diapers, milk, wet wipes, the works) and the ever-first-aid kit.
- Bring extra cash and loose change, especially for toll fees when you're required to pay the exact amount.
- Have your cellphone fully charged before a trip, or bring an extra battery. In emergency situations, you'll be glad you did. Remember to bring the battery charger as well. You'll be surprised, even those who frequently travel tend to forget this small detail at the top.
- As they say, what is most important is the journey itself. Enjoy it, savor it while you drive, and try not to get distracted by other drivers. The weather is already hot, so why get hot and bothered on the road? Always keep your cool, drive carefully, and think safety first.

For more inquiries about Hyundai's Summer Motorist Roadside Assistance, visit your nearest authorized Hyundai dealer today.

Drive your way.

From Benguet to Naga,
have a safe and trouble-free trip
with HYUNDAI along the way!

Hyundai's Summer Motorist Roadside Assistance

Available on April 9, 11 and 12, in seldom service points from Benguet to Naga

- Assistance to coated vehicles
- Free check-up and estimate
- Minor repairs on belt and brakes, suppension parts, aircon system and overheating problems
- Dealership assistance for other major and preventive maintenance service
- Plus! A display of the latest Hyundai cars!

HYUNDAI

Aplus METRO
Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

Driver in Ateneo student's death barred from leaving

By Julie M. Aurelio

A QUEZON CITY COURT HAS BARRED THE LADY DRIVER WHO allegedly ran over and killed an Ateneo grade school student in February from leaving the country while the trial is ongoing.

In issuing a hold departure order against Ms. Theresa Torres, the court granted an urgent motion filed by the private lawyers of Jose Almonaro, father of Julian Carlo, co-friend, who was killed in a traffic accident.

Judge Angelene Mary Quimpo-Sale directed the issuance of the HDO against Torres and barred her from leaving the country without the court's permission.

In a three-page resolution, Quimpo-Sale of Regional Trial Court Branch 106 granted the Almonaro lawyers' motion for the immediate issuance of a HDO while the three criminal cases against Torres are being consolidated.

Torres is facing two counts of reckless imprudence resulting in serious physical injuries and one count of reckless imprudence resulting to homicide for the death of Julian.

Torres allegedly ran over the Ateneo Grade School student on Feb. 24 and injured the boy's nanny, Rea Saavedra, and Jessa Almonaro, the boy's sister.

Torres, 41, has been out on bail while awaiting her last arraignment on May 29 for the three cases.

Torres's lawyer, Rolland Villones, said in a text message that he was "not aware (of the issuance of the HDO) as of the moment but it is expected."

The accused is also known by her other aliases: Ms. Theresa Borgao-Lalo, Ms. Theresa Borgao-Torres Lalo, Ms. Theresa Gregorio, Ms. Theresa Torres and Ms. Theresa Lalo.

In the order dated March 27, Quimpo-Sale barred Torres from leaving the country unless she secures the permission of the court to go on trips abroad.

"Let copies of this order be furnished to the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation, and the Department of Foreign Affairs for their information and guidance," part of the order read.

Also furnished with copies of the HDO were the assistant city prosecutors assigned to the case, the Almonaro lawyers, Torres and her lawyer, as well as Arnel's parents.

Meanwhile, Arnel's father appealed to Torres directly and personally face "the music."

DRIVER, A-4

RESPITE FROM THE HEAT

A group of people take respite from the sizzling heat by using umbrellas as shade during the traditional "Kuburyo ng Pha'siha" street drama staged Tuesday in Manila by various militant organizations to observe the Lenten season. Marchers carried cruciflix as human depict the agony of Filipino people under the present regime.

OUTLAST MAINTENANCE FREE BATTERIES
START AGAD!

Transport group urges release of ₱1B for LPG-run jeepneys

By Marlon Ramos

A MASS TRANSPORT group yesterday sought the help of President Macapagal-Arroyo for the release of the P1 billion fund which she had

TRANSPORT, A-4

Filing of Income Tax Return

08 DEADLINE: APRIL 15, 2009 **DAYS TO GO**

14 days to Earth Day 2009

"Today or Lupa Hinirang
Mangyan Lumen,
Bahay Tagalog"

Did you know that...

Metro Manila generates some 6,700 tons of garbage per day?

Out of this some 725 tons of garbage is being composted or recycled while the remaining 6,000 tons are either hauled, illegally dumped or openly burned.

Republic Act No. 9003 mandates segregation of wastes. This means that all biodegradable materials must be composted. Those wastes that can be recycled must be sold or given to recyclers, and those that can be used must be reused. Everyone is enjoined to do their share by segregating, reusing and recycling our wastes.

To create a stand for Mother Earth, please log on to www.earthday.ph.org

2009 LYRA SUMMER ART CAMP
For Art Enthusiasts Ages 5-99
7 Separate one week (M-F) - half-day - camps beginning Monday
April 13, 2009. Either 8:00-11:30AM or 1:30-4:30PM

Week	Date	Theme	Place
1	April 13-17 (AM)	A Place Called Earth	Sanctuario de San Antonio Social Hall Bay 1
2	April 20-24 (AM)	Under The Sea	Nuvo Fortuna, Mutinlupa Hall
3	April 27-May 1 (PM)	Paint Your Pet	Ali Mall Activity Center
4	May 4-8	Pop Art (AM) Think The Cuba (PM)	Centro Español de Cuba
5	May 11-15 (PM)	Manga Art	Gateway Complex Lobby
6	May 18-22 (PM)	My City Quiz	Where to be announced
7	May 25-29 (PM)	Think The Cuba	Where to be announced

* P1,000 per week. Fee includes instruction and a certificate.
* Different theme per week. Students can come multiple weeks.
* Student Art Show and reception every Friday at 12 am or 5 pm.
* Materials available for sale on site.

TO REGISTER, PLEASE CALL OR MAIL (02) 1234 5678 OR 901 4444 (TRU)

Log on to: www.lyraarts.blogspot.com for other camp venues or call 890 9431

1,038 held as Navotas gets tough on no-helmet bikers

By Beverly T. Nubiddad

A TOTAL OF 1,038 MOTORCYCLE riders have been arrested in Navotas City since January for not wearing protective helmets.

The several individuals were cited for violating City Ordinance No. 2004-13 in the first quarter of 2008, said a report submitted to Navotas Mayor Tobby Tiangco by the City Traffic and Parking Management Office (CTPMO).

The ordinance required all motorcycle and scooter riders to wear protective head gear and to put on reflectorized stickers/devices on their motorcycles when riding in Navotas.

Of those arrested, 332 had their vehicles impounded for lack of registration papers. The rest paid P550 as fines.

Tiangco, in a statement, said that he has directed the CTPMO to strictly enforce the helmet requirement among motorcycle and scooter riders even for those traversing the narrow streets of the city.

He added that even the Philippine National Police personnel and barangay officials—who usually make their rounds aboard motorcycles—are not exempted from the ordinance.

"I would like to remind everybody, even the PNP personnel and officers, that in Navotas we are strictly enforcing our local ordinances ... No one is above the law," the mayor said.

He said his office has been receiving numerous reports on police officers who ride around the city without wearing any protective headgear.

GETTING YOUNGER

Children from Barangay Guadalupe Nuevo, Makati City, learn to sing at the "Pabasa," a traditional way of observing Holy Week by chanting the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Motorcycle-riding shooters sow terror among Tondo folk

By Jeannette I. Andrade

TWO MOTORCYCLE-RIDING men went on a shooting spree before dawn in Tondo, Manila, yesterday, injuring three persons who were on their way home from a "pabasa."

Manila Police District (MPD) operatives have turned out to search for the gun-for-hire shooters, whom Tondo residents claimed have been using the residence in the area for target practice for two weeks now.

They claimed that the three casualties were only the latest in a long list of victims.

Police identified the three injured in the latest attack as Lourenzo Mendiolla, 30, of Dampas Street, who sustained a bullet wound in the left cheek and is undergoing treatment at the University of Santo Tomas Hospital; Steve Quiroz, 20, of Cabaunan Street; and Aaron Silva, 30, of Quiroz Street.

Quiroz and Silva sustained gunshot wounds in the knee, legs and ankle and are confined at the Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center.

Investigators said the victims were shot at around 2 a.m. at the corner of Quiroz and Cipriano Streets while on the way home from a pabasa at the Iloco Bisaya chapel.

Upon reaching the place, the suspects, their faces covered by towels, suddenly emerged and started shooting at them with handguns.

As soon as they left and a mobile patrol unit of the MPD station 1 responded supposedly to the site, the shooters zipped by and suspected of shooting at the police car and driving through the narrow alleys.

Just last week, two readers were shot by two motorcycle-riding men who also had their faces concealed by towels.

Photo (trio cube) reader Preston Aviola, of Pedo Street was declared dead on arrival by attending doctors at the Mary Johnston Hospital for bullet wounds in the head, neck, and chest.

Another victim, Jason Alfonso, of Quiroz (near vicinity) was also killed at the same hospital for gunshot wounds to the body.

A Tondo resident told the reporter that the motorcycle-riding men usually carried out their shooting spree between 1 a.m. and 4 a.m. on the streets. "They would shoot at anyone they shamed upon between those hours," the resident, requesting anonymity out of fear for his safety, alleged.

"It was just last week that one of the victims died. Previously there were at least four other incidents where people were shot in the area. Most of them were hospitalized but there were also other victims who were able to flee for cover," he revealed.

Bike lane on busy QC road urged

By Julie M. Aurelio

A QUEZON CITY COUNCILOR is urging the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority to create a motorcycle lane along Commonwealth Avenue to keep motorcycle riders from harm's way.

In a proposed resolution, city Councilor Bernadette Herrera-Dy said hundreds of motorcycles now traverse the busy avenue making the riders open to danger due to speeding vehicles.

"Due to high oil prices and traffic problems, many Filipinos have resorted to motorcycles as a means of transportation which has become commonplace in heavy traffic and are fuel efficient," she said.

But she noted that due to this development, many road accidents involving motorcycles had also risen. She said a motorcycle lane can help ensure the safety of motorcyclists and pedestrians alike.

Going on a holiday? Be sure to lock your office

By Jeannette I. Andrade

BURGLARS, TAKING ADVANTAGE of the long weekend, broke into a recruitment agency in Manila and stole some P1 million worth of cash and jewelry.

The thieves ransacked the office of the Manila Manpower Agency on 3 Agno-Bello and Pedro Gil Streets in Malate, while the owner and general manager Wilfredo Alan Jr. was away on a holiday with his family in Puerto Galera.

PO3 Lester Evangelista of the Manila Police District (MPD) theft and robbery section said that based on Alan's complaint, his office was burglarized of some P545,000 cash and assorted jewelry worth P500,000.

Evangelista pointed out that the break-in could have happened between 1 p.m. of Saturday and 8 a.m. of Monday, while the office was closed for the long weekend.

Inspection of contested San Mateo landfill reset

By Oi Yap

THE INSPECTION OF THE CONTESTED San Mateo landfill did not push through yesterday after the counsel of one of the opponents of the project, Filinvest Land, failed to appear, prompting a rescheduling of the inspection.

San Mateo Regional Trial Court Judge Manuel Tano was supposed to lead the inspection of the facility, which concerned residents and civic organizations had claimed to be in violation of environment laws.

Tano is hearing a petition for a preliminary injunction filed by ResiMateo Coalition and Filinvest against the operations of the company Eco-SM. The judge previously ruled against issuing a temporary restraining order upon finding no urgent reason to do so.

Upon a motion by Filinvest, the judge set an inspection of the facility "because it is necessary in his line and to address claims by the opponents about the alleged environment violations committed by the developer of the landfill.

But Filinvest and its main counsel, Marvic Leonen, also dean of the University of the Philippines College of Law, was unavailable, prompting Filinvest to seek a postponement of the inspection, which Tano granted.

Recently, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources gave the operators San Mateo Sanitary Landfill Development Corp., the go-signal to increase the landfill capacity despite allegations of environment violations by environmentalists.

Transport group urges release of P1B for LPG-run jeepneys

From page A-17

promised to subsidize the conversion of public utility jeepneys to liquefied petroleum gas-fed units.

Gerardo Cortes, president of Makati Jeepney Drivers and Operators Alliance Inc. (MJODA), assailed the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) for its alleged failure to finance their initiative to manufacture LPG-run jeepneys for Makati.

He added that even the Philippine National Police personnel and barangay officials—who usually make their rounds aboard motorcycles—are not exempted from the ordinance.

"I would like to remind everybody, even the PNP personnel and officers, that in Navotas we are strictly enforcing our local ordinances ... No one is above the law," the mayor said.

He said his office has been receiving numerous reports on police officers who ride around the city without wearing any protective headgear.

Cortes said in a news briefing:

"We had patiently attended all the government's seminar less ways to protect the environment. It's really disappointing to know that all of these is worse selected," he said in Filipino.

With the help of Sterer Alternative Auto/PE Co. Inc., Cortes said they were able to produce two prototype units to prove that local assemblers could manufacture LPG-fed jeepneys.

He said the prototypes were better in terms of quality and durability than the imported surplus LPG jeepney engines from Japan.

He said a 4T LPG engine for 1.4-seater jeepney costs around P260,000 while 3B2 LP engine for 18-seater and 24-seater jeepneys costs about P350,000.

Consuelo Ramirez, MJODA vice president, said the project would have benefited members of 32 jeepney organizations.

DID YOU KNOW

FLIPPED decides to the Black Nazarene was encouraged by Pope Innocent X, who issued a papal bull establishing the Confraternity of the Jesus Nazareno in 1650, and Pope Pius VII, who, in the 19th century, granted indulgences to people who prayed devoutly to the Black Nazarene.

Cyrill L. Bonalaan, Inquirer Research

Driver barred from leaving

From page A-17

sary process of justice" while the trial for the case is ongoing.

"Indeed, she owes it to her own families as a person to face her liabilities for the tragic deaths of our Asunti. Beyond decorum, the issuance of the court's HDO to spotlight and guard for her. It is needed for her own well being and healing," Jose Alcantara told the Inquirer in a text message.

METROBRIEFS

Tension grips Cubao terminal

TENSION gripped briefly the ultra early crowd at Araneta Center bus terminal in Cubao yesterday morning when a man with a gun rushed into the waiting area and was subdued and handcuffed by police. Said Supt. Edgardo Diaz, commander of the Quezon City Police District Araneta Center station, identified the suspect as Ferdinand Napal, operations manager of Dimple Star bus lines. Panelmen said that Napal was subsequently released after they have verified all the documents of the .38 caliber pistol he was carrying. But the incident sometime alarmed hundreds of passengers waiting for their rest of the terminal.

Nancy Carvajal

Youth in slay case hunted

POLICE are hunting down a young man who allegedly killed a 15-year-old neighbor by accident while playing with a pistol in Pasay City yesterday. Alvin Almirinez, of 167 Gamboa Street, Barangay 183, died from a lone gunshot wound to the neck as he was being wheeled into the Pasay City General Hospital, police said. The suspect, Alejandro Renabat, 26, quickly fled the area after the incident, police added. Investigators showed Renabat started toying with a handgun he was carrying while having a drink with some neighbors near Almirinez's house around 5:45 p.m. Almirinez, who was then playing billiards with a friend, asked Renabat to stop playing with the gun. Police quoted witnesses as saying the gun suddenly went off, killing Almirinez on the neck. Renabat was charged with reckless imprudence resulting in homicide and illegal possession of firearms.

Marlon Ramos

A mother's grim discovery

THE BODY of sleeping flesh led to the discovery yesterday morning by a mother of her 28-year-old son, who allegedly hanged himself at their home in Tondo, Manila. Lourdes Dag-Dag found her son Angelbert, who was allegedly been dead for five days, hanging from a beam inside the servants' quarter's of their house at 206 Recolletos cor. Felipe Calderon Street. Police said the alleged suicide had used a child's skipping rope to hang himself. He came to the call of that his mother had seen him holding when she last saw him alive at around 8 p.m. last Saturday. Police said that several days before the suicide, Engelbert had reportedly been depressed over losing his employment as a warehouse supervisor and failing to land a new job.

Jeannette I. Andrade

Thailand braces for massive anti-government protests

BANGKOK—THAILAND'S PRIME minister vowed to prevent a "civil war" in Thailand as the nation braced for a massive anti-government protest on Wednesday amid fears of bloodshed, just two days before Asian leaders gather in Thailand.

Publicly admitting the insecurities of his 4-month-old government, Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva said security forces do not want to clash with protesters but will do what is necessary to maintain law and order.

"We cannot allow a civil war or a people's revolution," Abhisit said in a nationally televised speech late Monday, noting his and the public's concerns about violence at least 10 times. "If the situation leads to a riot, the government cannot stand still."

Anti-government protesters who have encircled Abhisit's Bangkok office for almost two weeks have called for tens of thousands of supporters nationwide to join Wednesday's rally. They plan to march from Democracy Monument in the center of King Bhumibol Adulyadej's top advisers, Prem Tinsulanonda, whose they accuse of masterminding the 2006 coup that ousted former leader Thaksin Shinawatra.

The protesters are supporters of Thaksin, who has been self-dressing the public almost nightly via video link from exile. Thaksin was ousted for alleged corruption and convicted last year for abuse of power but remains widespread support among the rural poor majority that benefited from his populist policies.

Fears has denied the accusations but the ever public criticism of the privy councilor broke a taboo in Thailand where members of the royal family and their aides are highly revered. Fears had been indirectly accused of orchestrating the coup before; the last rally outside his home in July 2007 turned into a riot in which more than 300 people were injured.

"We have a job to protect key institutions, protect good people and the respected elders of the country," Abhisit said.

The prime minister held an urgent security meeting on Monday with top defense officials, police commanders and chiefs of the armed forces "to get ready for the situation that could happen," he said.

Any violence in the demonstrations could undermine Abhisit's government as it prepares to host leaders from 16 Asian nations from April 10-12. Leaders from around Southeast Asia, China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand are gathering in the seaside town of Pattaya, about a 90-minute drive from Bangkok.

The protests are the latest episode in Thailand's long-running political turmoil, which has become a tug-of-war between Thaksin's supporters and opponents. Each is known by the color of shirts they wear at rallies, red for pro-Thaksin and yellow for anti-Thaksin. AP

SUPPORTERS of Thailand's ousted premier Thaksin Shinawatra hold placards during a demonstration in front of a hotel in Pattaya on April 1. AP

A BAG of pistachio nuts

Salmonella found in California pistachio plant

FRESNO—FEDERAL OFFICIALS confirmed on Monday they found traces of salmonella in a second California pistachio processing plant that sparked a nationwide recall of the nuts.

The Food and Drug Administration said state and federal inspectors discovered the bacteria in "critical areas" at Setton Pistachio of Terra Bella Inc., the second-largest pistachio processor in the nation.

FDA officials also said they found plants at the facility where nuts and roasted nuts could have become cross-contaminated with salmonella.

Setton Pistachio, which sells its nuts to Kraft Foods Inc. and 35 other wholesalers across the country, temporarily shut down after voluntarily recalling more than 0.9 million kilograms of roasted nuts.

The company expanded its recall on Monday to include all raw and roasted pistachios from its 2008 crop. A company spokesperson did not immediately return messages seeking further details.

"The company is working closely with the FDA on this matter and is reopening Selly," Setton spokesperson Fabia D'Avino said in a statement. AP

Indonesians question value of democracy as polls near

SUBABUSH—PUFFING ON A clove cigarette and balancing a bundle of firewood on his head, 79-year-old farmer Oji is one of millions of poor Indonesians who question the value of democracy.

Nothing much has changed in his village in Subabuah regency just a couple of hours' drive south of Jakarta, since the fall of its dictatorship fell in 1998 and the "Reformasi" era of democracy is reborn began.

Now, as 171 million eligible voters ponder who to back in local, provincial and general elections on Thursday, Oji looks at all the party posters adorning his village and asks what all the fuss is about.

"I can't feel the impact of democracy here. It's just the same old life as before it," said the Muslim, who earns 50 cents a day.

"It would be good if the elected leaders improve our living conditions after the election. But if not, then that's fine with me," he added, as he nodded sadly in dejection.

Indonesia's 2nd in democracy is a riotous beast.

Some 12 million eligible voters ponder who to back in local, provincial and general elections on Thursday.

The WORLD

Edna Lorenzo B. Ibarra

Obama: US not at war with Islam

ANKARA—IT WAS A DECLARATION MEANT TO resound throughout the Muslim world. The United States, said Barack Obama, "is not and will never be at war with Islam."

Then he set out to woo with religious leaders and toss holy olive oil his first visit as president to a predominantly Muslim nation.

Obama acknowledged without promise over the Iraq war on Monday but said Muslim worldwide have little to common with terrorists such as al-Qaeda and Islamic militants targeting them. Finishing out, he also spoke of Muslim contributions that own background.

The new president went to speak with the religious leaders and visit Istanbul's famous Blue Mosque on Tuesday after two of his eight days in Europe and Asia, both geographically and culturally.

A day earlier, he said in a speech to Turkey's Parliament in Ankara, "We seek broad engagement based upon mutual interests and mutual respect."

"Our partnership with the Muslim world is critical, not just in rolling back the violent ideologies that people of all faiths reject but also to unleash the opportunity for all its people," he said. He promised renewed progress in his removal from the two majority of Muslims.

Turkey has Nato's largest army after the US, but relations between the two countries soured after the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which the Turks opposed.

PRESIDENT Barack Obama addresses the general assembly at the Rahmi Pudaverren building in Ankara, Turkey, on Monday. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is near center. AP

Turkey barred US forces from going through its country to attack Iraq.

Now, however, since Obama is withdrawing troops, Turkey has become more cooperative.

Hosting pools of its southern border with Iraq, Turkey's role in overseeing security will be pivotal after US combat troops are gone, despite the Kurds' lingering problems with Kurdish militants in southern Iraq. Turkey also has important leverage with both Afghanistan and Pakistan and has served as a broker between Israel and several Arab states.

"Turkey's geostrategic ties in your vicinity to be at the center of things. This is not without flaw and West divide—this is where they come together," Obama said.

He acknowledged Iraq's bridges over Iraq. "I know that many in shared in many places," the Muslim faith to unite," he said. "I do not say this as somebody who has observed it not and will never be at war with Islam."

Obama's visit was closely watched by an Islamic world that harbored deep distrust of his predecessor George W. Bush.

Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya, two of the biggest Arabic satellite channels, stretched to remain live.

The president invoked his own heritage: "The United States has been enriched by Muslim Americans. Many other Americans have Muslims in their family, or have lived in a Muslim-majority country. I have lived in some I am one of them."

Obama's Kenyan father and grandfather were Muslims, and he spent time as a child in Indonesia, the country with the world's largest Muslim population.

The president spoke for about 25 minutes from a small rubber-marble and oriental restroom in the wall of a vast, airy chamber packed with Turkish lawmakers in orange leather chairs.

Except for a few instances of polite applause, the room was quiet during his speech. AP

#ICG joins Philippine-Taiwan Business Conference and awards Former President Fidel V. Ramos

Philippines and Taiwan share a long-standing business relationship, mutually acknowledging each other as partners for growth. This was reaffirmed and strengthened in the recently held Philippine-Taiwan Business Conference in Taipei, Taiwan.

Among the invited guests is #ICG Philippines' Vice-President for Sales & Marketing Elnora Dizon, Philippine representatives from the Manila Economic and Cultural Office, Clark Development Corporation, alongside the guest of honor, former president Fidel V. Ramos.

#ICG Bathroom Fixtures is one of the many Taiwanese investments in the country that has stimulated Philippine economic growth by providing local business and job opportunities. Even since its establishment 13 years ago, #ICG has always believed in the Philippines' tremendous potential mainly driven by the skilled, creative, English-speaking workers. The Philippines, being an excellent export platform has put #ICG in an excellent position to showcase Filipino talent through international product trades.

The local Philippine market cannot be overlooked as one of the chief factors for Taiwanese businesses. Filipinos always look for value-for-money quality purchases that Taiwanese businesses strive to provide. What it comes to bathroom fixtures, #ICG understands how price-conscious Filipinos are and wants to make their bathrooms more comfortable and relaxing, not so much for luxury but for improving the quality of hygiene in the home.

For their successful Philippine business venture, #ICG Taiwan Chairman Tony Chiu recently guest of honor, former president Fidel V. Ramos, as #ICG Superbi water closet, as a symbolic gesture of appreciation.

#ICG Chairman Tony Chiu awards an #ICG Superbi Water Closet To former President Fidel V. Ramos and former First Lady Ming Ramos

Letter said to be from New York gunman forecast mass killings

SINGAPORE—"HE MAN WHO GUNNED down 13 people in an immigrant center thought police had haunted him for years, even spreading rumors about him and teaching him to be stingy and apparently one fatal recalling 13 people before returning "to the dust of the earth," according to a rambling letter in broken English mailed to a TV station the day of the massacre.

Authorities did not immediately say on Monday if they had verified the letter's authenticity, but the city of Binghamton said it was reviewing the material as "evidence in the investigation."

The letter was mailed to News 10 Now, in nearby Syracuse, and postmarked on Friday, the day Jiverly Wong stormed into the American Civic Association and went on a rampage before killing himself.

"I am Jiverly Wong. Shooting the people," the letter begins.

The letter was dated March 18, more than two weeks before the shooting, which occurred in a neighborhood of homes and small businesses. It included photos of Wong smiling with two guns, a gun permit and his driver's license.

The letter ends with him saying he can't "always be your life," that he is working on the job "4 a.m. and will "run my own life." He added: "At least two people with me gone to

10 EXCLUSIVE

THIS image provided by News 10 Now in Syracuse, N.Y. on Monday shows a photo of gunman Jiverly Wong which he TV station says received in the mail from Wong on Monday. A letter that included a few photos, a gun permit and Wong's driver's license was postmarked Friday, April 3, the day Wong killed 13 people before ending his carnage. AP

tent to the dust of the earth."

Police specialized Wong, who was ethnically Chinese but was from Vietnam, was angry over losing a job and frustrated about his poor English skills.

Wong, 41, spent several years in California, where in 1992 he was arrested on a bad-check charge. It was in California, where he drove a truck, that he divorced his wife, Xia Ping Jiang, in 2006. He returned to Binghamton the next year.

The letter reads, "I am sorry I know a little English." AP

BONIFACIO GLOBAL CITY PASSIONATE ABOUT SAVING PLANET EARTH

It was a rare occasion of global unity as Earth Hour was marked last March 28, 2009. The ceremony aimed at raising awareness on climate change did not pass by unnoticed at the Bonifacio Global City. Moreover, it was the time designated for more than 80 countries all over the world to switch off lights for decreased energy consumption; the Activity Area of the Bonifacio High Street buzzed with excitement with a program hosted by Miss Philippines-Earth Water 2008, Marian Michelle Obina and Miss Philippines-Earth Air 2008, Maria Hazel Eguia, with performances by the Bonifacio Art Foundation Inc. adding to the fun.

The event was glazed by none other than Taguig City Mayor Sigfrido "Sigi" Tinga who led the shutting down of lights. The countdown by the audience was reminiscent of New Year's Eve except instead of lights from fireworks filling the sky a slight darkness enveloped the surroundings after everyone had shouted "one!". This was followed by a warm applause from all those present, indicative of the willingness of everyone to be sacrificial for the sake of the planet. "I really appreciate the fact that we have people from the private sector who are also pushing the environmental agenda. We can't do it alone, this has gone beyond the realm of the NGOs. Environmentalism used to be something cute, but now it's a necessity, it should be a necessity", the mayor emphasizes. "Activities like this address two major problems we are facing, one is the fact that people are more people realizing that we'd better do something about the environment now" he continues.

Meanwhile, President of Bonifacio Global City Estate Association, Inc. and Executive Vice President of Fort Bonifacio Development Corporation, shared her enthusiasm for the project during her short speech. "Earth hour is promised on a very simple gesture but it is a symbol of our collective will to save our environment. It is refreshing and hopeful to see that the world can still come together for Mother Earth. I'm hoping this becomes part of our tradition, something to be executed almost annually". To signify their commitment to saving the Earth, members of the audience were invited to sign on the backdrop of the stage. Those who affixed their signatures included representatives from the project partners Ayala Foundation Inc., World Wildlife Fund, and Mas Earth Foundation and sponsors Philamlife and Tiki Finley's. Tales Pack and the Net Group.

The World Wildlife Fund shared a video showing how Earth's Hour started in Australia only two years ago before it promised to an international level. Nelly Furtado and Cate Blanchett were just a few of the famous celebrities who attached their names to the advocacy. Throughout the significant hour, a film produced by the Presidential Task Force on Climate Change educated those in the vicinity about the dire effects of climate change and how every individual participation is essential in solving this alarming problem that is bound to affect several generations. Energy consciousness must not stop with Earth Hour.

The Fort Bonifacio Development Corporation (FBDC) is doing its share by ensuring that its developments comply with the Department of Energy and ASEAN energy standards as well as other best practices in the region. "We continuously strive to work on new technology and energy efficiency which is why energy efficiency", Noel Kintanar, Head of Commercial Operations for FBDC discloses.

Taguig has several ongoing environment-related programs. Electric bicycles are now plying some of their roads. "They're more robust than the regular bicycle, no fuel, no fumes. We hope it catches on", shares Mayor Tinga. They also have Street Rangers who see to it that people do not litter anywhere in the city. "Kinda starting to understand what it is because everybody is setting an example and somebody is explaining to them. Aside from helping us clean up, this project has created jobs for people", he explains. A project that creates handicrafts out of water hose is also being implemented. "What used to be a problem for us is now an industry", the mayor proudly relates.

Mayor Tinga concludes the last that there is a long way to go before the earth's situation can be turned around. "We're nowhere near there, so many people still don't care but we gotta start somewhere". He declares. Aileen Zosa, Bases Conversion and Development Authority Vice-President for Planning and Business Development sums it up beautifully when she said "Individually, we can start simple initiatives. Collectively, we can save planet Earth"

Taguig city government, Fort Bonifacio Development Corp., Bonifacio Global City Estate Association, Bonifacio Estate Services Corp, Ayala Foundation, Inc, World Wildlife Fund, and Mas Earth Foundation joined forces for Bonifacio Global City's participation in the Earth Hour

Taguig City Mayor E Tinga led the ceremonial switching off of the lights to signify the group's commitment to saving the earth

Francois Noel Kimasse (Head for Commercial Operations - Fort Bonifacio Development Corporation), Mayor Dy (FVP - FBDC and Chairman & Pres - BDCSA), Aileen Zosa (VP - BDCSA)

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Editor Raul D. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Carrie S. Mariano

BUSINESS

Inflation slowed down to 6.4% in March

Rate of rise in consumer prices well within BSP forecast range

By Roland W. Dorotheo

THE RATE OF RISE IN CONSUMER PRICES EASED IN March, settling at 6.4 percent year-on-year from 7.3 percent in February, according to the National Statistics Office's latest report on inflation.

Prices last month also increased at the same pace as that of March 2008.

Based on 2000 data, last month's inflation was the lowest in eight months. The rate of rise in consumer prices peaked at 12.4 percent in August 2008.

March inflation was well within the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' forecast range of 6.5-6.9 percent.

"This slowdown in price ... confirms our within-target inflation path for 2008," said Armando M. Tetangco Jr., BSP governor.

In terms of commodity groups, the group of food, light and water (FLW) exerted downward pressure on the overall consumer price index as rates eased down by 2.8 percentage—a faster contraction compared to the 0.7 percent seen in February.

All the other commodity groups showed slower increases in prices, including those of food, beverages and tobacco (FBT); clothing, housing and repairs (CHARR); services; and miscellaneous items.

Tetangco yesterday said the figures brought headline inflation to the first quarter to 6.9 percent.

"Appropriate monetary and fiscal policies contributed to the inflation rate's movement," Tetangco said, hinting of a possible easing of the BSP's key policy rates.

Since December, the BSP had cut its borrowing and lending rates by a total of 125 basis points to 4.75 percent and 6.75 percent, respectively.

Although the rise in prices of FBT remained in double digits at 11.4 percent from 12.3 percent the previous month, it was still the lowest figure seen in nine months. It peaked at 17.8 percent in July last year.

The BSP said that for food alone, the increase in prices went

INFLATION B2

T-bill rates decline on BSP policy expectations

TAN

INTEREST RATES ON TREASURY BILLS went down across the board as investors' earlier wariness was flooded with bullish sentiments that the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas would further ease lending and borrowing rates.

Rates for the bellwether 91-day T-bill went down by 6.9 basis points to 4.352 percent from 4.421 percent.

The 182-day bills fetched 4.541 percent, down by 11.2 basis points from 4.653 percent.

Also, the yield for the 364-day debt instrument went down by 3.9 basis points to 4.710 percent from 4.729 percent.

Investors tendered P2.88 billion for the benchmark issue, of which the Bureau of the Treasury accepted P1.5 billion as planned.

For the six-month issue, buyers tendered P9.26 billion. The BTr went for the full program of P2.5 billion.

For the yearlong treasury bill, investors tendered P6.732 billion. The BTr accepted P1.5 billion as targeted.

National Treasurer Roberto B. Tan said in an interview the market sentiment continued to be benign.

"Inflation for March was pegged at 6.4 percent. How sexy can some people..?" Tan said. "There's a positive sentiment (among investors) because decreasing inflation leads to expectations that the BSP may further ease its key policy rates."

The BSP's overnight borrowing and lending rates were down by 25 basis points to 4.75 percent and 6.75 percent, respectively last February.

The policy rates have each gone down by a total of 125 basis points over the past four months. Roland W. Dorotheo

T-BILL B2

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 47.793 = $ 1

As of 8:15 a.m., April 7, 2008

MARCH APRIL

STOCK MARKET

Shares close higher

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

From March 16 to April 1, Toyota dealers nationwide will provide safety inspection for all customers who will drop by Toyota workshops.

TOYOTA TOYOTA TOYOTA

ACCENTURE FUJITSU 3M GOODYEAR

Banned from Wack Wack

BIZ BUZZ
By the staff

A PROMINENT businessman has reportedly been banned recently from the premises of the ultra exclusive Wack Wack Golf and Country Club.

His violation? Believe it or not, it's "blocking the driveway." But wait, there's more. According to our source, when another member complained and asked that the offending car be moved, this businessman "accidentally" bumped the complainant's car.

It would be interesting to know if this businessman, who is also involved in the insurance business, had filed a claim for the damage on his car. Wouldn't it be more interesting if the car of the supposed victim was insured by the same firm, too?

Dustin L. Lucas

Standout PSE board nominees

WITH THE end of Jaime Jose Ysmael Villaluz's term as chair of the Philippine Stock Exchange, Senator Ramon Jolo Bernabe Revilla Jr. says the next chair should be "young and dynamic."

So when it comes to satisfying these two criteria, there are two names on the PSE's list of nominees that stand out. One is independent director nominee **Hans Sicat**. The son of economist Gerardo Sicat is an investment banker who had worked for Salomon Brothers and its successor, Solomon Smith Barney, under Citigroup. As an investment banker, he credited many deals both on the equity and debt markets, giving him a unique perspective on capital markets.

The other standout is independent director nominee **John Shipton Bonnin**. Who, you ask? Bonnin—also an investment banker—is the newly minted president and chief executive officer of homebuilder "Ayala" Ameen. In short, he knows real estate.

Take your pick. Dustin L. Lucas

Who's Alejandro Ng Wee?

THE CONTROVERSY brewing the Legacy group and the Securities and Exchange Commission has unnerved someone of a similar problem faced by the unnamed owner a decade ago involving Globalcom Investment Corp. or Winsway Inn, first letter about the Empire-East investment bank or old office).

At the center of the controversy is a suit filed by a certain **Alejandro Ng Wee** against the directors and officers of the defunct investment bank. Ng Wee confesses to lost of his some P400 million, which he claims he invested in Pilipinas.

Given the way Ng Wee invested his money in Winsway, chances are it will be a long while before he gets to see any of that money to search...if at all.

Records of the legal battle indicated that the funds were invested under numbered accounts, and then moved into four separate accounts, each under the name of four people who represented the original investors.

Ng Wee now has to prove that the funds invested under those names are indeed his.

One offshoot of the legal battle is the curiosity within Chinese Philippine groups regarding Ng Wee himself. Some active members of Chinese business circles are hard-pressed to name any major business interests owned by Ng Wee that could boost his claim of a P400-million investment. Dustin L. Lucas

Bitter pill swallowed

SHARES of the Lopez-controlled geothermal power crown jewel EDC have surged by about 36 percent since last month, mainly on speculation that the entry of a foreign partner in power biz is Red Vinci Holdings is imminent.

Its price continued to rise on heavy volume over the last few trading days. Stock market pundits say the Lopezes themselves are buying more shares to "leverage down" their costly acquisition of a controlling stake in the company.

This development also boosts EDC's share price, prompting any suitor to make a better offer for a piece of the company. Of course, the prospective partners is trying hard to haggle down its entry cost.

But with fresh money soon to flow in from the PLDT group and the Metro group's growing interest in EDC, the Lopezes claim to have the time before running into the arms of a white knight this time around.

After all, the latter pill has already been swallowed with the sale of the family's 20-percent stake in power retailer Meridian. Boots C. Dumlao

Ablaza to chair fmr mobile bank

AFTER retiring as CEO of Globe Telecom, **Gerry Ablaza** will soon be named chair of the Ayala group's newest baby, a pioneering mobile microfinance bank that will ride on Globe's cybercoin remittance and e-commerce platform GCash, as well as on some from BPI's expertise in banking.

Philippine Bank, the vehicle to be used by Ayala Corp for this venture, is now a mere vanity but an existing bank acquired by Presidential Bank, which DPI brought a few years back.

The plan is for BPI to sell 40 percent of the bank—capitalized at P500 million—to Globe and 20 percent to parent Ayala Corp.

Unlike its competitor, PLDT, which is going mass generalist, Globe is betting its chips on financial services to a new growth area. And Ablaza's wide experience is needed to change the banking paradigm.

"Today, we see the mobile phone mostly as a wide wallet. The load becomes a product simply for SMS and voice. But once the GCash becomes pervasive and is linked to a bank, there is a potential that people will carry their savings account in their pockets as well," new Globe CEO Ernest Cu says. Boots C. Dumlao

Eton gets additional funds

Pru Life UK profit up 16%

INSURER PRU LIFE UK, THE LOCAL UNIT of British financial giant Prudential plc, posted a 15.8-percent increase in net profit last year despite a decline in single-premium sales arising from the weak investment environment.

In an interview, Pru Life UK president Nicolo Bilandes Jr. said the local unit realized P929.1 million in net profit last year compared to P800 million in 2007, on the back of higher investment income as well as higher first-year and renewal premium sales.

He said the company generated a total premium income of P4.1 billion versus the P3.28 billion recorded in the same period last year.

"This is because single premium sales were much lower in 2008 than in 2007," Bilandes said.

The slowdown in take-up on single-premium issuances reflected the weak investment environment, but Bilandes said Pru Life UK still told most single-premium products that many of the bigger players.

In the meantime, first-year premium went up to P1.2 billion last year from P856 million a year ago, while renewal premium was also up to P1.9 billion from P1.6 billion.

Bilandes said Pru Life UK's ranking based on 91.2 billion combined worth of first-year plus 10-percent single-premium last year, based on the company's exchange of data with other top players, would be number three.

He estimated that the company would also rank third based on first year premium plus 100 percent of single premium, inclusive of the reinsurance business, with a total production of P1.276 billion from these businesses.

Pru Life also reported P2 billion in new money generated from the unit-linked business before insurance charges. Redemptions were reported at about P700 million.

"Considering the financial turmoil that clouded in 2008, this still would prove the investors' confidence in unit-linked funds," he said.

A unit-linked insurance policy is a hybrid investment that combines life insurance and mutual funds—one to obtain the necessary to provided with a life insurance cover and the premium paid is invested in investment funds. Boots C. Dumlao

P350 million used to buy land for new projects

By Doris C. Dumlao

ETON PROPERTIES PHILIPPINES Inc., the real estate arm of the Lucio Tan group, has reportedly received P350 million in fresh funds from its stockholders.

The amount was used for strategic landbanking.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, Eton said it had received the money from its controlling stockholder, Asiatown Holdings Inc., in partial payment for subscription to 1.23 million in outstanding shares issued to the latter.

The company said said funds received from Asiatown is making various deposits for its land purchases for new development projects in its "pipeline," Eton corporate secretary Ma. Cecilia Rayco said.

With the payment, Eton's remaining subscription covers other than Asiatown amounted to P573.66 million.

Asiatown controls 94.6 percent of Eton's 1.3 million in total outstanding shares, while the remaining is held by the public.

The real estate company has a market capitalization of about P1.96 billion based on yesterday's closing price of P1.70 per share.

Eton, formerly Belabar Resources and Holdings Co. Inc., was transformed by the Lucio Tan group into a real estate development company in 2005. It now specializes in high-end and mid-income luxury residences, IT and business process outsourcing office developments, and township projects. Recently, the company also ventured into retail economic and mixed-use development to take advantage of the property boom.

Eton is now preparing for the launch of its latest development projects and is looking at Cebu, Batangas and Laguna as the possible sites.

Inflation slowed down

From page B1

down to 11.9 percent in March from 12.8 percent in February.

Also, the increase in prices of clothing dropped to 2.9 percent versus the year from 5.2 percent. Housing and repairs to 3.9 percent from 4.8 percent; services to 1.8 percent from 2.7 percent; and miscellaneous items to 5.1 percent from 5.5 percent.

On a month-on-month basis, the increase in the general level of consumer prices eased to 0.2 percent in March from 0.8 percent in February.

The BSP said this was mainly due to the continued drop in the prices of services from -0.6 percent in March from -0.3 percent in February.

Also, prices of FDW items contracted by 0.3 percent in March from 0.2 percent in February.

Meanwhile, prices of FDW items increased by 0.1 percent in March from 0.3 percent in February.

Higher monthly price increases were observed in FBT and H&R items, at 0.4 percent and 0.2 percent from their respective rates of 0.1 percent and 0.3 percent last month.

However, prices of miscellaneous items increased faster at 0.3 percent from 0.2 percent.

With a report from Reuters

Shares close higher

From page B1

market already broke a 50-day moving average resistance level and ... should extend a rally."

He put the immediate support at 2,000 points.

Energy Development Corp. added 7.41 percent to P4.35, while Metropolitan Bank and Trust gained 1.75 percent to P38.50.

Rank of the Philippine Islands rose 2.70 percent to P57.

AFP

Forex reserves steady at $38.87B as of end-March

By Roland W. Dorotan

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas yesterday said its foreign currency reserves remained stable amid the worsening global financial crunch, leaving the country relatively insulated from worries of other nations about being illiquid.

The BSP said the country's gross international reserves (GIR) reached $38.87 billion in end-March, which Officer in Charge Armando L. Suarez described as "broadly steady" compared to the previous months' levels.

This was, however, slightly lower than the end-February level of $38.92 billion.

The GIR is a closely watched economic indicator as it determines a country's ability to finance its transaction with the rest of the world.

A comfortable GIR level also allows monetary authorities to protect the local currency against speculation.

Suarez said the GIR level in March reflected the net receipts by the BSP of the government's deposit of loan proceeds and its own foreign exchange operations, as well as income from its investments abroad.

He said these inflows were counterbalanced by net outflows arising from the repayment of maturing foreign exchange obligations of the government, and valuation losses in the BSP's gold holdings.

The BSP maintained losses in its gold holdings due to the lower price of gold in the international market last month.

Also, Suarez said the current GIR level could cover 6.2 months of imports of goods and payments of services and income.

"It was also equivalent to 5.6 times the country's short-term external debt based on original maturity and 2.9 times based on residual maturity," he said.

Further, BSP data show that the level of net international reserves (NIR), were down by 1.58 percent to $37.2 billion as of end-March from $37.9 billion in the previous month.

NIR, which includes revaluation of reserve assets and reserve-related liabilities, refers to the difference between the BSP's GIR and total short-term liabilities.

The decrease was attributed mainly to the BSP's higher short-term liabilities.

SEC, PSE urged to probe PRCI management

THE MINORITY SHAREHOLDERS OF Philippine Racing Club Inc. has called on the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Philippine Stock Exchange to investigate the management and several members of the PRCI board for alleged violation of the Code of Corporate Governance and "false, deceptive and misleading disclosures."

In a letter to SEC Chair Fe Barin, the all-US-Ipine minority shareholders alleged that the PRCI management and board refused to allow them to inspect corporate books and records "reducing minutes of board meetings."

"Repeated requests by shareholders have been consistently refused and perfunctorily denied," the shareholders said through legal counsel Brigido Dulay, who added that "all our attempts to obtain material information relating to the disbursement of company funds have been stonewalled."

Dulay also said the PRCI management and board had also failed to disclose the compensation awarded to its chief executive officer and the top four most highly paid officers as provided for by the code.

In the meantime, in a letter to PSE president Francis Lim, the minority shareholders warned that the PRCI management and board might have misled the bourse when they disclosed that the targeted proceeds of a recent P50.4-million stock rights offering "will be used to partially fund the completion of a new racetrack in Cavite."

Dulay told Lim that the PRCI board had earlier agreed that the said stock rights offering was not for the Cavite racetrack "but for the purpose of easing the excess foreign equity in PRCI which was beyond that allowed by law and the Philippine Constitution."

ROUNDUP

Nido eyes $40M from Galoc

NIDO PETROLEUM LTD. EXPECTS ITS SHARE in the gross revenue from the Galoc oil field in offshore northwest Palawan to reach $40 million to $50 million in 2009.

In a presentation, Nido said the estimate was based on an average production rate of 10,000-11,000 barrels of oil per day. The share of Nido from this output amounts to 2,320-3,340 barrels of oil per day.

Nido has a 22.29-percent stake in Galoc Production Co. WLL., the majority owner and operator of the Galoc oil field, governed by Service Contract 14C. GPC holds a 68.29-percent working interest in the Galoc license.

The estimated share in the gross revenues was based on an oil price of $60 a barrel.

Last year, Nido's share from its production at the Galoc oil field reached P17.862 million, which translated to A$15.2 million in sales revenue. **Amy P. Remo**

Otto lowers target

AUSTRALIAN FIRM OTTO ENERGY LTD. HAS restructured its capital raising activities, lowering its target to A$23.5 million, as a result of the increased "timing and completion risk" associated with a potential farm-out of Service Contract 38 in offshore southwest Palawan.

Otto Energy had planned to raise A$35 million from institutional placements and an accelerated entitlement issue.

According to Otto Energy chair Rick Cigale, the planned farm-out of Otto's 80 percent equity in SC 38 to parent SMC Mitsui Petroleum Pty. Ltd. signed on March 31, "remains dependent on a number of conditions and approvals have not been achieved."

Cigale, however, said in a regulatory filing that "Otto remains confident that a farm-out of SC38 will be achieved. **Amy P. Remo**

P&G ... From page B1

thereof net sales by 5 percent as the US dollar appreciated versus the euro, British pound and Canadian dollar. Volume declined 3 percent for the quarter, driven primarily by trade inventory reductions and consumption declines," the Procter & Gamble Co. had said in a Jan. 30 announcement.

The company's fiscal year starts July.

Ecolaya said the recession had an impact on PRCI's overall business, with consumers now bringing home lucky splurging.

"We had to slightly sell off our margins, but the other bars in Asia and the Philippines is less than what we're seeing globally," he said.

PRCI Philippines recently launched the P3-billion "Value" packaging initiative for laundry brands Tide, Ariel and Ala Clean.

Under the initiative, P&G increased the volume per unit of these three brands by 16.05 percent without jacking up their current suggested retail price. The campaign will last six months.

PNOC to put up energy company, seeks ADB loan

By Arra B. Bacus

THE STATE-OWNED Philippine National Oil Co. is seeking for a $7-million loan from the Asian Development Bank that will be used to create a new subsidiary, which will help government and private firms become more energy-efficient.

PNOC president Antonio Cuñas said the government wanted to set up the company soon, possibly by the end of this year.

"We are just waiting for [its] incorporation from the Securities and Exchange Commission," Cuñas added.

Cuñas said that the proposed energy service company (Esco) would be the first of its kind in the Philippines and Asia.

He said some countries in Europe, as well as the United States and Australia, have similar energy service companies already in operation.

According to Energy Secretary Angelo T. Reyes, the Esco would "target heavy users of energy, and the challenge is for them to create value out of saving energy for the heavy users."

PNOC will put up the "super Esco", which will eventually supervise smaller Escos to be put up by the private sector.

Reyes said that the super Esco would help heavy power users develop energy conservation and reduction projects as well as provide private firms financial and technical support.

Among the services that the Esco could provide include audit of company equipment and facilities; joint financing; provision of energy-efficiency options; installation services; monitoring of operations and performance; and promotion of energy-efficient technologies and services.

Depending on the agreement, the savings to be realized from the reduced consumption will be split between the company and the Esco or may be used for other energy saving projects.

The super Esco—conceptualized as one of the components of the Philippine Energy Efficiency Project (PEEP)—would be a future subsidiary of PNOC.

For 2009, the Department of Energy (DOE) target energy savings of about P67 billion by forging the use of more than 100 million liters in oil equivalent of electricity and fuel.

According to DOE data, the government projects a reduction in electricity consumption of 180 gigawatt-hours and in fuel use of 6 million liters this year, or P1.5 billion in savings for government offices.

For the private sector, the DOE said it was eyeing savings of up to 100 million liters of oil equivalent, worth about P3.2 billion.

EDC invests ₱119M in geothermal projects

THE LOPEZ-LED ENERGY Development Corp. has put in about P119 million in geothermal projects and recollect P65.4 million in the upgrade of its existing rigs, in the first quarter of 2009.

EDC chief financial officer Ramon O. T. Rodriguez said that the capital outlay came from the remaining proceeds of the company's P9.2-billion initial public offering in 2006.

Rodriguez told the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday that EDC still had P899.3 million left over from the IPO proceeds as of end-2008.

Over P400 million of the amount went to expansion.

Meanwhile, P126.9 million was spent on the development of EDC's various projects that would further strengthen its position in the geothermal industry.

These geothermal projects included the Mindanao III, which got P61.47 million; Sangara, Tanawon, Kayabon, which got a collective P5.08 million; Bacon, P1.37 million; Nasulo, P7.23 million; and Northern Negros Geothermal, P48.7 million.

The Tanawon and Bacon projects in Albay and southern Negros, respectively, each has the potential to generate 40 megawatts (MW) of power, while the Nasulo project in Negros Oriental may add another 20 MW to the grid. Meanwhile, the Mindanao III project in Cotabato may boost capacity to the Mindanao grid by 51 MW.

EDC also allocated P65.27 million for the upgrading of its drilling rigs, as a bid to become more competitive in the drilling industry.

Of this amount, P1.41 million was spent on the commissioning and testing of its rigs, while P46.6 million went to the purchase of a crane.

Another P8 million was used to buy a tractor from Wenzhou Shin Tractor, while another P11.78 million was used to buy a forklift with a 6-ton capacity from Caterpillar. Arra B. Bacus

Cultivate soft skills, not just English

By Abigail L. Ho

EMPLOYEES IN THE BUSINESS process outsourcing sector, or those who want to enter the industry, should go beyond just grooming good English and communication skills, experts say.

Justin Myers, general manager of eTeleSystem's Global Communications and Management Academy, said starting up the ladder in the BPO world today required more than just English skills.

"All the soft skills, they have to have that: empathy, cultural knowledge, listening, critical thinking and analysis. They also have to learn their tools," Myers revealed in an interview.

He said being a BPO employee required a mix of multiple-tier and emotional qualities.

"They have to have basic power, of course, at the entrance, they have to think like an American because these are the people they will be talking to. They have to learn how to deal with a different culture," he explained.

eTeleSystem general manager Carlo Severini explained that, at the start, it was a parent's English-language skills that mattered.

However, as the industry grew, would-be BPO practitioners had to bring other skills to the table.

"At the onset, English was a critical concern. It was the minimum requirement. As we've grown and taken more sophisticated functions, there was a need to go beyond English," he said.

"But the focus on English supports the thinking that we have to develop other skills as well. If their English is good, then we can train them and focus on other things," he said.

The Business Processing Association of the Philippines has found six various projects that would equip current and potential BPO practitioners with the right skills to get the job, stay in the job and even secure higher positions in the industry.

Among these programs and activities are the planned National Competency Assessment Tool, more English proficiency training and leadership training for middle managers.

BSP had also received the first tranche of the P556-million loan for the Philippine Skills Infrastructure Program, which aimed to equip 60,000 individuals with the right skills to work in the growing BPO industry.

FILE BPO workers. English is no longer enough.

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April 6, 2009 – Accreditation of submitted eligibility forms

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Noted:
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General Manager

OBITUARIES

LEOPOLDO PRIETO y LOPEZ

19 Mayo 1920

Leo falleció el dia Siete de Abril de 2009, habiendo recibido los Santisimos Sacramentos y la Santa Unción (q.e.p.d.).

Su desconsolada esposa, Ma. Luisa Hernandez, sus hijos, Maria Luisa, Miguel y Teresa Oca, Leo, Jr. y Adelita Martinez, Antonio III (†) y Carmen Melecio; nietos Macrina, Marta, Rosanne, Teresa y Charlie, Jamille y Toby, Leo III e Ines, Karina y Raj; bisnietos, Emilio, Leandro y Carolina; hermano, Antonio, Jr., hermana, Teresa; cuñada Rose Marie; cuñado, Marcos; y demas parientes ruegan una oración por el descanso de su alma.

Sus restos mortales se hallan en la Capilla de San Francisco, Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park.

La Santa Misa se celebrará el Jueves, el 9 de Abril de 2009 a las 10 de la mañana en el Santuario de San Antonio. Inmediatamente después de la misa funeral, se procederá el entierro en privado, en la cripta familiar en el Santuario de San Antonio.

En lugar de flores, la familia agradece donativos para las obras de caridad de las *"Friends of PGH."*

Guinness star ends show roarin' and smokin'

By Tonyo S. Salazar

IT WAS A FITTING CLIMAX to end a car show that is economic doldrums—as every time—of the present global economic situation.

The final day of the 5th Philippine International Auto Show (MIAS) last Sunday at the World Trade Center Manila was, as expected of car-loving Pinoys, the live and loud (well, largely) event, for they would quickly make that up with a more lively finale.

Organizers of the MIAS, who still managed to exhibit 47 brands within the 20,000-square-meter indoor-outdoor space, estimated that around 70,000 visitors made their way in from April 2 to 5.

Organizers also observed many visitors flocking to the exhibits of China-made cars, the displays of classic cars, new luxury cars and SUVs, novel concepts such as the first commercially available full-electric car (two-seat sedan model displayed) being charged on site, free access to test-drive cars, as well as contests like the Guinness World Records holder for precision driving successfully parallel parked a red Subaru Impreza WRX Sport Wagon into a row of Impreza. Though there were no official measurements made on site, Swift already holds the Guinness record for closest parallel parking with only a total of 32 cm gap between three vehicles. For this stunt at MIAS last Sunday he missed three by 31 cm, but nevertheless impressive, so that would hardly fit in his log at the years between the cars.

When the show's host Boss Bolito asked Motor Image Philippines' head de Jesus Ordo was driving the new NEXT to park even closer to Swift's car, Dr. Arnel remarked "to cover?"

Guinness record

Swift also holds the Guinness record for the fastest dance spin and, fighter 34-mi, and he showed how and why to an appreciative audience, when he seemed to rush in all the sights, sounds and smells of all his years. Swift's dancin could stop up such a fresh shout of acceleration the smoke the excite car seems to disappear to the floor. Environmentalists, tense to close your eyes on this part).

Swift also realized spectators participation with his two-wheel balancing maneuver—first using only one passenger and then adding in three more passengers for a fully loaded motorbike balancing stunt.

He holds 12 shows for the duration of the 5th MIAS, which were attended by almost 70,000 people.

Organizers credit the unique mix of cars both classic and modern, the wide range of after-market products and services on display, and the exciting shows and stunts for keeping the enthusiasts for the past five editions of MIAS above the 70,000 mark.

NEXT time you need to squeeze in and out of a tight fit, take it from Ryan Swift (a Guinness record holder for tight parking with only a total of 32 cm gap between three vehicles) the don't try this on your garage.

John Cesar G. Pangyarang

MOTORING

How to stimulate car sales

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

SINCE THE LAST QUARTER OF 2008, the global automobile industry has been suffering a pre-Lenten persistence with sales plunging, especially in North America, Japan and Europe. In January and February 2009, sales of new vehicles fell to the lowest in decades, prompting automakers to introduce new marketing strategies.

Hyundai Motor Co., whose sales regardless with its Kia subsidiary plummeted 37 percent in the United States from September to December 2008, posted a 14 percent increase in January, the biggest year-over-year increase that any car manufacturer has posted in the United States since May 2006.

Instead of offering more discounts, South Korea's biggest carmaker stimulated sales by introducing a return policy whereby buyers can return their vehicles if they lose their job or income within a year, or no cost and/or more cases with no penalty to their credit rating. The program covers every buyer of a loaned or financed vehicle who involuntarily loses a job, becomes physically disabled, loses a driver's license for medical reasons, is transferred to another country, is self-employed and files for bankruptcy or dies in an accident.

Hyundai got another boost to mid-class sales when its first luxury sedan, the Genesis which costs $33,000 to $35,000 less than many competing models, was named the 2009 North American Car of the Year.

Scrap bonus

Meanwhile in Germany the government launched a "scrap bonus" program on Jan. 27 whereby people who scrap an existing car that is at least nine years old and buy a new car that meets the latest emission standards are rewarded with a flat- 2,500 (about $3,000) government check. It helped increase February car sales by 21.3 percent from a year earlier, its highest monthly rise in the German Association of the Automotive Industry. However, the scrap bonus will be rewarded only to the first 600,000 new car purchases.

France, Italy, Spain and other European countries have also introduced the scrap bonus and in some cases, subsidized loans for buying cars. The scrap bonus has lifted the sales of small cars such as Volkswagen, Opel, Fiat and Dacia.

Long overdue

This writer believes that the Toyota Innova is long overdue for the Philippines. Its spacious interior can seat seven passengers in four such cabins that because the second row bench allows each seat to rotate independently and slide fore and aft, even second-row passengers could now have such silver to talk or play cards or whatever it is that passengers have to do to make the long trip a lot more enjoyable.

Moreover, the Limited edition also features a two-way-hand-mounted, 8-inch video screen, one on the second row and another on the third.

But whether to the Touring or the Limited edition, you'll be choosing, you can be sure that the new Town & Country is one automobile that could really spoil your passengers.

That minivan is becoming wellaverage models, packers and bins, including a dual glove compartment. The final choice between the four main but somewhat, dishwasher safe cupholders.

It's comfort, luxury and style in your choice of travel, the new Town & Country van is the vehicle for you. This minivan has impressive interior, unique and flexible seating and storage options as well as excellent drivetrains that will truly make your every trip stress-free.

Travel in comfort and style

Text and photos by Charles E. Bahinting

CHRYSLER MAY BE FACING ITS toughest challenge to hit the past Thursday (Thursday), as I bet this doesn't mean the American automobile manufacturer is no longer capable of producing marvelous vehicles.

One such vehicle is the all-new Town & Country, which this writer was able to test drive for a day, courtesy of DATE Motors Inc., the exclusive distributor of the Chrysler brand here in the Philippines.

At P2,220 million (sold P800,000 for the top-of-the-line Limited edition), the new Town & Country Touring edition may be considered a luxury minivan.

Indeed, the new Town & Country, as this writer found out, is simply bristling with luxury standard features in-cars with individual temperature controls for the front and front row passenger and everyone else seated at the back; heaters for the front and second-row seats; dual power sliding side doors; rear power liftgate door; steering wheel equipped with audio and cruise controls; HID headlights with automatic headlamp leveling system; the power seat-positioning system; and even a surround ambience lighting that bathes the interior cabin in a warm blue glow.

Powerful

Considering that this minivan seats seven, Chrysler made sure the new Town & Country is equipped with a powerful 3.8-V6 powerplant.

This 3.8-horsepower gasoline engine is powerful enough to pull the minivan's 2-ton body with no requests to any place, whether to why to Baguio or to the ol' Pagudpud in Ilocos Norte.

The powerful engine is married to a new six-speed automatic transmission (the gear selector is mounted high on the dashboard) just behind the steering wheel), which is not only a first-in-class transmission, but provides good acceleration—it to 100 kph in about 11 seconds—but electronically controlled, which means that the units could be stashed away to allow more room for refreshments or gear.

Buyers of the Limited edition on the other hand, gets the luxury to be assured new captain's chairs that could rotate 180 degrees to face the third row. There's also a flip-down worktable (this runs between these two seat rows).

Excellent

Indeed, the new Town & Country is excellent either there in paved road...it's fast, agile and floats softly on uneven road surfaces.

Whenever this minivan encounters speed bumps (unmarked pavement), this writer found that this minivan's independent (front) and rear beam suspension system ensures a soft ride, free in dampening almost all of the harshest bumps that, bumping you a lot more relaxed on long drives.

Since comfort is given much attention, Chrysler made sure that the new Town & Country still provides the best seating flexibility and innovation.

The "Stow-n-Go" system retained the Town & Country's signature. Here 'n Go second-row seats, which means

THE NEW Town & Country is now even more focused on comfort and amenities.

THE DEAD interior's location may look like odd, but it's actually easy to get used to.

A summer of storms

MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

IT IS RAINING IN THE MIDDLE OF SUMmer, how cold is that? Infantile explanation of La Niña aside, it is puzzling to see water falling from the sky in the open of the dry season, for some people are benefiting from the desolation of our planet's weather patterns.

Go ask the driver of Bryson GP's car No. 22 if he finds any of this freaky, earthquake weather to his liking. Bryan is this year's Malaysian Grand Prix bridged driver, another race win in China Bryan—the greatest bunch of overachievers since the Dirty Dozen.

The Extraordinary Senate of the world car industry should play race to just on a copyrowery and unpredictable fashion as the recent 15 Mr. Bowyer and his Bridgestone Dingoal Diffusers. The last of much of the industry is only as race as the ability of the next pundit's crystal ball.

Payback time

Years of seeming invulnerability to issues of business-line profitability, fuel efficiency and consumer relevance have finally caught up with many auto manufacturers, especially the US Big Three. It seems as if those issues never matter to them but payback time is here.

Months ago, wild stories of smaller, more profitable foreign manufacturers buying up chunks of Chrysler, General Motors or Ford were easy to dismiss. First of all, normal packages in the billions of dollars were rarely available to try to keep these brands as "more and apple pie" as possible. Also the political pressures on the newly seated US administration to keep these brands free from foreign control was massive. The meddling irony is very different though.

The Big Three is the cornerstone of the Big Three is Italian manufacturer Fiat S.p.A. The announced global partnership with Chrysler recently however enough. Truth of the matter is that the partnership label is likely more split to those highly emotional drivers, meant to soften the blow of something very divisive.

Even in this world once a 35 percent ownership stake, seems to underwhelming plants and the entire Chrysler dealer network in exchange for small car technology that should have already been in their portfolio be considered anything but horrific? Consider too that all this is being given to a brand that is practically alien to the Continental US.

Some might be tempted to argue the point that Chrysler too will have access to Fiat's manufacturing facilities and dealership abroad and somehow this will make everything fine. There are the same people who would prefer a PT Cruiser over a Fiat Sienna Panda, a decision that would betray that they know absolutely nothing about cars.

Mixed predictions

The fluidity of the global automotive issues is starting to hit home as well. Despite lukewarm local economic conditions, the past few years have seen a consistent rise in brand new car sales, surpassing the 100,000 unit mark at some point. Even at the height of the global financial crisis, local industry insiders could see seem to put down their rose-tinted eyewear. The performance of late 2008 to 2009 was supposed to blow sales figures into the atmosphere. Maybe that happened, maybe it didn't, but as of this moment, all bets seem to be off.

Our tiny local auto market used to be able to boast of having two consumer sources shows each supported by a bevy of aftermarket related events. The rumor as of late is that there will only be one large auditor show this year. And judging by the amount of coverage there is certain those that ended just last Sunday, it is easy to gather which one is to spend. Reality sucks doesn't it?

People in the industry have mixed predictions on how big this current downturn will last. The optimistic ones point toward a three-year window of really slow business, dipping car sales and general bad-polling. Those already in a foul mood are saying 20 years of woe. Six years seems the most reasonable prediction for the difficult period, that phrase don't think we are over the worst of it already. The worst still looms on the horizon.

TODAY'S RUMBLER STICKER: Are you following Anna this close?

P&G to beef up workforce in RP unit

By Abigail L. Ho

WHILE OTHER MANUFACTURING firms are cutting their manpower, Procter & Gamble Philippines will be adding 300 new employees next year, mainly to beef up the information technology and finance aspects of its business.

According to PNG Philippines public relations manager and external relations leader Irene Kindsvi, the company would increase its employee count from the current 1,312 to 1,412 by 2010.

"We don't consider cutting jobs. While we're not significantly growing our workforce, at least we're increasing it slightly," he said.

PNG Philippines president and general manager James Ladbury said the company's Cincinnati-based parent remained happy with the way things were going in the Philippines, even amid the global recession.

"I'm still smiling. Our global guidance applies to us in the Philippines," he said. "For the, in the first three months of this year, we've met all our targets every single month."

He declined to give specific volume and income targets for P&G's Philippines operations, however.

Globally, P&G's net sales for its October-December 2008 fiscal quarter slid 7 percent to $20.4 billion.

"Unfavorable foreign exchange re-

PAGE B3

New planes take Cebu Pacific fliers to more destinations

Expect more than nine million Filipinos to fly to key destinations this year as Cebu Pacific Air (CEB), the country's top domestic carrier, takes delivery of yet another aircraft to augment its current routes.

The leading budget airline has received a new ATR 72-500, a twin-turboprop model built in France and boasts of leather seats, higher maximum weight capacity and better power management. It comes in time to bring more passengers to local spots during the peak summer season, made from this, two more ATR 72-500s are expected to be delivered this year.

In 2008, we increased the number of domestic passengers by 20.7 percent and international passengers by 33 percent. With our continued expansion this year, we aim to improve connective among our passengers on the reliability of our services and surpass the success of previous years," shares Candice Iyog, CEB vice president for marketing and distribution.

In the past few years, the company has been aggressive in acquiring new aircraft, taking delivery of six brand-new ATR 72-500s, four Airbus A320s last year and 10 Airbus A319 and five A320s in 2007. The Cebu Pacific aircraft fleet is currently recognized as one of the youngest in the region.

More destinations, increased frequency

By constantly updating its fleet, the airline continues to provide additional frequencies and open more domestic and international destinations. CEB recently launched flights from Manila to Catarman and Calbayog in Northern Samar and Virac in Catanduanes. CEB also opened direct services from Cebu to Siargao, Legazpi and Dumaguete. The ATR 72-500s will be flying domestic routes while the Airbus units servicing key routes in the Philippines and take more passengers abroad. CEB now has a total of 31 planes, all fully maintained for an optimal utilization strategy that brings down overall costs and makes flying more affordable.

From CEB's Manila hub, there will be an additional 28 flights to Caticlan every week while those going to Busuanga can now pick among 10 flights weekly.

Boracay (Caticlan) remains to be the busiest domestic destination for CEB as it has a total of 84 flights weekly to this prime leisure spot.

Service from the Cebu airport to Caticlan will also be increased to twice every day and there will now be daily flights from the Davao hub to Zamboanga.

The Manila-to-Singapore route, now flying twice daily, will be augmented with five more weekly flights. CEB will also increase the frequency of its Cebu-to-Hong Kong flights to daily and add a Saturday schedule going to Ho Chi Minh.

Three developments bring the total number of Cebu Pacific's domestic flights to 1,206 from 1,152 and international flights to 260 from 248/weekly.

"By offering low fares and providing brand-new aircraft, we hope to encourage and enable more people to fly so they may enrich their lives through travel," adds Iyog.

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LIFESTYLE Home & Entertaining

Church rises by the mall

New Batangas landmark was built by a landed clan and supported by the town folk

By Ma. Corres P. Goyo

HAVE CHURCHES SUCCUMBED TO THE malls? By the looks of it, it seems they have.

There are now chapels in malls where Catholic Masses are held and where shoppers and staff persevered could go. They no longer need to take a trip to regular churches or worship. Even a plans for project for Manila has been constructed in a popular shopping place.

Shop-till-drop drop shopaholics groaning under the weight of their purchases could arrange their guilt and fulfill their religious duties by dropping by the chapels in the malls.

Convenient? Hopefully not a saving, if you can't take mall rats to the church, take the church in the mall. But something doesn't seem right, if you ask those who consider church attendance on Sundays a sacred duty and not an afterthought or obligation to be hurriedly fulfilled.

In Batangas City, where an SM Mall has become a landmark, a new church has risen beside it. Big, beautiful and separate from the mall complex, the church has become a landmark itself, a place to go to not necessarily for shoppers but for the entire public and even those from outside the city. A stream of people from all walks of life comes to pray all through the day.

Thanks to the Dimen, a landed philanthropic family in Batangas, the Metodismo ng Sambutan Trinidad (Church of the Holy Trinity) has come to be.

Grand endeavor

Antonio Dimen (brother of the Dimen clan who helmed the project, Rowping, as he is fondly called by kith and kin ("Twice-jogney drivers call me Enjoy"), is also executive director of the Batangas Cultural and Historical Commission. He is a lawyer and musician (UP Law and UP Conservatory of Music) and studied economics to the US.

Being the unmarried one and the lawyer to the board of 10 of Dr. Juan Panzer and Concha Acosta, Rowping became the caretaker of the family estate. He runs the Pastor-Quinto Family Memorial Foundation and the estate of his deceased aunt Marcelo Quinto. Hence which, he says, is he has in dispose of according to his wishes.

"The lot bought from our family the land where SM Mall now stands," says Dimen. "Years later, SM wanted to buy an adjacent lot for parking. Because SM was there, the land value had increased."

SM's Hans Sy and Dimen agreed on the price and made a deal. SM was going to buy the lot for parking in the current value but the money must be used to build a church on the 5,000-sq. m church property beside SM. This church lot was part of the Marcelo Pastor estate donated to the archdiocese in 1956 when Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales was the archbishop.

"Our family had always wanted to build this church," Pastor says. "The amount SM paid went straight to the church's construction, it did not pass through my hand."

The amount should eventually go back to the Pastors as the parishioners pay bills to little for the church to become literally theirs. It's as if the Pastors merely advanced the money.

"We want the people to own the church, every stone of it," Pastor adds. "Even the single folk make pledges, like P20 a week for three years. Eighty percent of the parishioners here are farmers. It's easy for them to donate because they see the church already."

The money thus returns goes straight to the foundation, which is involved in cultural, education and health projects to benefit the community.

VIEW of the back from the altar

Neoclassic architecture

Dimen describes the church's architecture as Neoclassic. Architect Rod M. Bermudez designed it free of charge. Fr. Bautista, of the Tarlac diocese, designed the altar. DDT Iconstruct built it in one year.

On Nov. 12, 2007, the church was consecrated by Lipa archbishop Ramon Arguelles.

"When the church was inaugurated," Pastor recalls, "the place was filled to overflowing. The people chanted with me, 'Kita ito, ano ito?' ('That is ours, this is ours!')"

Columns (two on each side) adorn the facade. Between them are statues of Saints Peter and Paul. On the sides are more life-size statues of saints.

The stained-glass panels in front cannot be found anywhere else. One shows Jesus as priest, and another as the Sto. Niño on top of a fig. Why close?

Pastor explains the church is in Bigg. Bulacan (pokpokan means "potter's place"), and there's a legend that the Sto. Niño statue seen in the cathedral had been found on top of flowering bayi (lemongas, where the "Batangas" came from). Big stained-glass windows on the sides lend color to the church's interiors.

One important item on the side altar is the Glorious Cross, which has the Crucified Christ on one side and the Risen Christ on the other. The cross was used for processions during the 2000 Jubilee Year. This dramb is also called the Shrine of the Glorious Cross.

Above the altar is a stained-glass rendition of the Sacred Heart, while behind is a reproduction of a painting of the Holy Trinity by Spanish painter Bustillo. Underneath is the columbarium integrated into the Chapel of the Resurrection.

SIMBAHAN ng Sambutan Trinidad in Batangas City

Filled with joy

A recent addition is a belfry with ancient bells from Holland. Beneath it is the Baptismal Lowang (Chapel of Light).

And why are a cafe? Café Gregoriano serves entire Batangas coffee and light entrees. It is one way for the church to earn income, Dimen says.

While studying in New York, Pastor recalls, he would sing under the shower Tony Fernandez' (whom he sang Neapolitan songs) and

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LOLANI: Twalla, the adorable and Hawai'i-diverse Pete Lesh; Jean Antonio

BABY Handl, Baby Fernando, Yael Serrano Parsons, Pearle Arcache Morales and Conchitina Sevilla Bernardo

Baby Handl hosts dinner for friends from Honolulu

ETIENNE Arcache Morales, Michelle Sarney and Carlos A. Morales

BETTY Arca Aquilio

HIRAY Arca

DR. PAUL Ladrera

ANNABELLE Plantilla, Rainbow Foundation director, hands over certificate of appreciation to Eico Commercial and Industrial Corp. managing director Pomi Eleazar.

CITIZEN regional director Herman Li, Bianca Valerio, and Blaire-Richard Gutierrez Lim

SEE WAS ONE OF OUR TOWN'S TOP models, darlings. When Handl, who was then the hottest ground-running ex of the Hilton Hotel chain, asked her hand in marriage, she moved to Honolulu, Hawaii, where her husband became the big boss of the Hilton Group in the Pacific.

So you can imagine my surprise when I got a call from my pal, the exotic and beautiful Baby Santiago Handl. She breezed in to town to attend the second Philippine Ballball, an international ballroom-dancing competition. "Massive, dahling. I'm hosting a dinner and dance party at the ballroom of the elegant Mandarin Oriental, Manila, in honor my fantastic guests from Honolulu. I know you'll love them all." they included the former first lady of Hawaii Jean Ariyoshi, Helen Ariyoshi, ballroom-dancing enthusiasts Paul and Marie Ludrera and Antonio Sorrano.

That night was also an exciting reunion of Baby's fabulous close pals whom she has known since their wedding days in the 1970s....Yael Serrano Parsons, Baby Fernando, Pearlie Arcache Morales, Conchitina Sevilla Bernardo, and Joanne Goodhouse who all dropped everything and dashed over to the hotel. Missing were Flavia Gomez and Cheri Pie Villegas. The younger generation, Maria Parsons, George Bellotta and Baby's relatives, Gino Fuentigo and Anne Meeks, Mikky Arce and niece Kitty who was with hubby Mark Angelle, also swanned with Baby's son and Hyatt Korea executive, handsome Marc Handl and his gorgeous Korean girlfriend, actress Byung Hee Kim.

The former Manila fellow gang came in full force. Marietta Arce Kalaw, Sidney and Bong Santarsiello, Sonny and Ruth Lim Santiago, la emperatriz Ludeng Panlilio, Charlie Reyes, Marisol Delgado, Tess Joaquin Serrano, Sen. Serge Osmeña who arrived late and chatted with Wilfi Gatpay, Carmen Pandilla and Estella Lim. Bubbly-as-ever Ling, suave Gadby Bautista, rocked the dance floor with Baby and a US dance champion, tall and handsome Lucas Jaime who traveled with the Honolulu contingent.

Baby, or "Mata" as she is known in Honolulu, is still as gorgeous, adorable and fun as she was as a model-beauty titleholder and wife to the late Hilton top honcho Richard Handl. With a good-looking ex-lover at her side, she has since been breezing in and out of town.

It was also her birthday that night, as she danced, dazzled, dazzled with her man.

Love ya, Babes. Cheers, palengges.

Walk the green mile

Last Sunday was the day when Walk the Green Mile got off to a super start, palengges. Brilliantly organized by the environment conservation group Haribon Foundation, in partnership with Eico Commercial and Industrial Corp., the exclusive distributor of premier Brand Insect Rep Deep Insect Spray, the event at Fort Bonifacio is a big step in support the preservation of the Philippine rainforests.

Hundreds gals flocked to the Ignacio GB Tools booth for the eco-chic flip-flops made from nets, recycled materials and supplies, palengges.

Eico Commercial and Industrial Corp. managing director Pomi Eleazar and events and security encouraged everyone. "We hope that you continue to support the Ignacio GB Tools Collection to help preserve our environment."

The event got rolling with entertainment-infotainment marching around the streets of Bonifacio High Street: Smart and Marilen Elizalde; Cardon and Melissa Elizalde; Monico Olondriz; Greenbox expert consultants Cleva Lacdeg; HP's gang headed by brand of choice member Jowyn Joey Garcia.

Then everyone chilled out at Le Jardin for cold drinks and hors d'oeuvres as Annabelle Plantilla presented Pomi E with a Certificate of Appreciation of support for sponsoring the exhibition and her efforts in supporting the preservation of the Philippine environment. She said: "We would like to thank you for your support as this will help accelerate activities in planting a million hectares of native species around the country by the year 2028."

Hey, palengges, for buying Ignacio tools from the Glaxie Hardware kinda Collection, a donation will be made to Haribon Foundation, to conserve and protect the Philippine rainforests by increasing the number of seeds planted each year. So get involved in this super movement, dahlings.

Grab the Brazilian Ignacio GB Tools Collection for women, available in Davao, Naga, Cabanatuan, Pampanga, Bacolod and other shopping nationwide. Log on to www.ignacioglobal.com for more details.

Eco-Drive collection

Premier timepiece maker Citizen Watch Company Limited recently launched its eco-drive 2009 Collection during a star-filled reception at The Spa in Bonifacio Global City, palengges.

While checking out the different watches, my single eye caught a design inspired by aeronautical gauges, one that has radio-controlled world time, aviation slide rule, an alarm, chronograph, three sub dials.

Dahlings, I was so impressed with it for you can now purchase online stores nationwide from the US, Europe and Japan. By simply selecting the local area, the search automatically displays the product line in Europe, the United States and Japan. Not bad, huh?

There is also the Aqualand Eco-Drive—the first in the world with an analog depth meter, dahlings.

Another is Citizen's Eco-Drive featuring a large awesome size-date display at the center of the face, with date adjustments at exactly 6 oclock.

The collection was presented with top icons from different industries like Sanna Ramos, entrepreneur and chic jockey wearing Eco-Drive's Global Counselled watch. Mich Dulce, fashion designer in her Eco-Drive Calendrier; Bossa Nova Princess Hirit wowing a timepiece from the Citizen's Brunswick Collection; and professional diver-model-actress Daisy Toomse, wearing Citizen's Eco-Drive Promaster Diver's watch.

After showing the Eco-Drive Collection, Bianca Valerio introduced Herman Li, Citizen Watches regional director, who gave a short speech. "I am excited with Eco-Drive's promise of 'powered anywhere as long as there is light' to present all Citizen's desire to take advanced technology to create convenient and user-friendly products."

There it was party time with DJ Jessica Ramos, dahlings.

Check the stunning array of Citizen Eco-Drive watches, available at SuCasa Ranch Stores and leading department stores, palengges.

QUICKIE Defensa, Gino Santiago, Helen Ariyoshi, Rush Lim Santiago, Jean Ariyoshi, Nicola Santiago and Sunny Santiago

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH
Maurice Arcache
Photos by Alex Van Hagen using YSL Pixels Salcedo

SOFIA Zobel Ricalde and Nina Herrera-Wang

"AMAZING Race Asia" runners-up Cruel Rodriguez and Tuba Wang share their Citizen Eco-Drive watches.

CALIBRE Magazine's Carl Cosmos

ALVIN Lim and Margarita Perez during the latter's 18th birthday party recently. Bettina Araneta Morris dancing during Perez' birthday bash.

Books to feed the soul this Holy Week

WHEN THE HOLY WEEK ROLLS along, I often end up...whether I am on a beach, in the privacy of my house, or in a plane somewhere—with books to feed my heart and soul, those that help me mull over the most important things in life.

Let me share with you my reading list for this forthcoming season:

"Glimpses of Heaven" is a wonderful compilation of stories put together by Trudy Harris, RN—a hospice nurse for many decades now, and former president of the Hospice Foundation for Caring.

The book is a collection of 61 real life stories, personal memoirs of people whom Harris has accompanied at the end of their lives. The book is helpful in those caring for the dying and those who have recently lost loved ones.

Among the questions she answers in the book are: What do you say to a loved one who is dying? How can you make a dying friend feel safe? Does a dying person really see angels, hear music, or see friends and family members who have already died?

It is a thought-provoking and touching book that will bring you comfort and maybe even make you shed a happy tear or two.

ROOTS AND WINGS
Cathy Babao-Cabello

"The Heart of Healing." Over the last year or so, I have been witnessing and praying for the father of a dear friend who is stricken with cancer. I wanted so much to be able to do right by him, to provide the words and the comfort as he travelled (and continues to travel) through this terrible disease.

Judy Babao-Cabello's "The Heart of Healing" provided me with the much-needed inspiration and gave me a truckload of ideas on what to do and what to say as a critical time of illness.

Babao-Cabello touches us lives to the many compassionate, supportive and caring souls as she takes time giving the reader invaluable tips for the journey toward healing. He knows the terrain well since he personally took care of his wife, Tingting, as she struggled with lupus.

Babao-Cabello uses the acronym HELP—Hope, Encouragement, Love and Prayers—to put in a nutshell the attitudes and actions outside of doctors and medicine that he thought Tingting needed to get well.

"Those attitudes and actions formed a daily journey for, reminding us that healing depends not just on medicine but also on the things that feed the spirit, mind and heart."

The book is a must-read by anyone who desires to give a sick loved one the very best care. It reads like a guide-book on what to do and what not do, while at the same time providing us sprinkles and nuggets needed comfort for those with-names called.

"Heaven's Butterfly." Let me save making a plug for a little book my daughter Pia and I wrote.

"Heaven's Butterfly"—a children's book with beautiful illustrations by Butch Alvarez—tells the story of our life in the first year after my son Miguel died in 1998. The story is narrated from Pia's point of view as a 7-year-old trying to cope with the loss of her 4-year old brother.

Written in a language that every child (ages 7-11) can easily understand, the book is one way of sharing our story with the world in the hope that it will bring comfort to other grieving children and families.

Time and again I have seen a child's grief simply sweep under the rug or not given importance, perhaps because the adults caring for them do not really know my books. I have seen countless new and unseen wounds that can easily be avoided if only caregivers are given the right tools.

a childhood loss in their hearts or many years after the death had taken place.

The book we wrote also provides tips for parents, teachers and caregivers on what to do when a death takes place in a family. This is the type of book that needs to be read by the parent with the child because the child may have many questions regarding illness, life and death that a parent can use as a teachable moment.

"Heaven's Butterfly" is the first in a series of books under the Special Topics series of Anvil Publishing.

May the Holy Week provide you and your family with many moments for bonding and personal introspection.

E-mail the author at cathybabao@gmail.com

THE POWERwomen of HSBC: SVP for Commercial Banking Mimi Concha; Personal Financial Services Deputy Head Aurora Tirol; Chief Operating Officer Gigi Paz de Roda; VP for Corporate Affairs Johanna Garcia; SVP for Credit Risk Management Pilachi Gloriga; and Tess Garcia, SVP for Employee Relations & Communications

How these successful working moms do it

By Joy Rojas
Contributor

ONCE CALLED THE WEAKER SEX, today's woman is clearly the businesses, what with her innate ability to juggle roles as wife, mother, mentor, friend and successful working woman—an oft-relied-on-cum-household, high-heeled package.

Last March, HSBC's diversity initiative "Work It, Mama!" introduced seminars to five female executives who manage to meet the demands of a high-powered career and a growing family.

How do they do it?

They have the support of their office. It may seem frustrating, but HSBC apparently encourages its employees to focus on family matters as well.

Two years ago, HSBC human resources officer-in-charge SVP Tess Garcia walked up to her boss and said she was going to take the day off. She certainly had a good reason: she was about to pick up her then three-year-old daughter Maria Sophia. Thus she was allowed to leave in the middle of the day course as no surprise.

"When someone asks me if they can go home early because they have to pick up their kids' report card or attend a school activity, I never say no," says HSBC chief operating officer Gigi Paz de Roda, herself a mom of a young boy and girl. "I also want them to prioritize their family."

HSBC credit risk management SVP Pilachi Gloriga likes that the corporate setting also initiates fun events that require employees to bring their kids to work, such as a trick-or-treat session during last year's Halloween.

They have the moral support of family and friends. Her and her four other sisters may be married with kids, but HSBC commercial banking large corporate business SVP Mimi Concha still calls on her sisters to look after her kids, and enroll them over, when she's busy at work or away on a business trip.

"Capitalize on the kids' love," she says with a chuckle.

Living a kilometer away from her mom and sister is comforting to Pilachi as the distance is far enough for privacy and independence—but not too far to run to when she needs help.

Having a papa who cares for your kids as much as you do also helps. "She loves my daughter," swears Tess of her nanny who was present during Maria Sophia's arrival. "That's why I pamper her a lot."

They've got their husbands at their sides. He may work for a top multinational, but Mimi's husband also does his fair share of raising a young family. He represents the couple during their kids' school events, and even does the groceries when the can't.

Pilachi's husband, who works at HSBC, also has no qualms about pushing a supercilious stroller, and Tess' husband takes it a step further. "He's a great cook!" she announces proudly. "My career have become where it comes to food because I like to go to the wet market while he likes cooking in the kitchen."

They are Dads' Dads: whereby SVP for sales and deputy head of personal financial services Annette Yrol takes her two kids to school so she can be at work by 7:30 a.m., and have a leisurely lunch at noon—"my sanity break," she says with a sigh.

Mimi's version of a break is to pamper herself by shopping or going to the salon...with her daughter. "We could be having manicures together," she says. "Or I could pick a shirt for her and she could pick a shirt for me."

They use technology wisely. At 2:40 p.m. on the dot, Gigi calls home to check on her son who gets in from school at 4:30 p.m., she does the same for her daughter. "Thank God for the (Blackberry)!" she exclaims.

Pilachi's lifesavers, meanwhile, is the AUM. It's a big help when she can't be physically present to pay the bar kids' tuition fees.

They don't deny themselves "me" time. Spas and shopping are ways these five ladies like to relax, but sometimes, simply locking the driving yourself to and from work, as Gigi does, is already a major treat.

"You have to make time for 'me' time," declares Annette to women who tend to feel guilty when they carve their hours away from family or work issues for a while. "Without it, you won't be as enriching to your husband and kids."

They know what their priorities are. Work may give them a sense of accomplishment and financial independence, but it's nothing next to the fulfillment and joy of family life.

"I always regret saying 'sorry' to my kids," says Gigi. "It's funny, but we tend to say we work for our kids, when we actually don't spend any time with them. And finally when we do have time for them, they've grown and have their own friend. I know my time with them is limited, so I try to make the most of it."

Sharing Maria Sophia in her life has prompted Tess to take better care of herself: she watches what she eats and has started exercising.

"Work has also taught me to be more assertive," she reflects. "But with my daughter, work now has more meaning."

When will sidewalks be returned to pedestrians?

By Linda B. Bolido

I WENT TO QUEZON CITY LAST week and saw that the Metro Manila Development Authority had posted signs on certain streets proclaiming they were in violation of some MMDA regulations.

One garage door that was rectangle shaped had signs that said "unlawful ang gate na ito" or something to that effect, to indicate that the contraption was out of sync with the rest of the structures along that strip. Literally out of line, too, as it was about a couple of meters longer than the other houses on the block.

It was obviously an afterthought, with the original structure probably not having a garage. When the owner had the money to buy a car, he had the garage made. But since the original design did not have space for this new addition, the gate had this strange irregular design obviously meant to provide enough room for the vehicle.

A few houses away, MMDA's pink signs declared a piece of property an eyesore as it seemed to be filled with trash.

I don't know how long these signs have been there, but if they were meant to shame the owners of these targeted properties into action, they were dismal failures. There did not seem to be any attempt to remove the signs, nor was there any visible effort to correct the problem and align the garage that offended the MMDA with its neighboring edifices.

The junk that bothered the MMDA people's eyes also remained.

Futile

A major reason, probably why all this effort was futile was because the MMDA initiative seemed to be unilateral. I saw other offenses during that trip that seemed to have escaped MMDA's notice.

Everywhere in the metropolis, in fact, people who do not have the space for whatever purpose they have in mind seem to think the sidewalk is there for them to use any way they want to.

They open a carinderia and put tables and chairs on the sidewalk, effectively blocking pedestrians. Or they build additional rooms and, as in the previously mentioned case, garages. Others do not even bother to have garages inside. They just make the sidewalk their own parking spaces for motorcycles, cars and even service vehicles.

Singalong houses, for instance, is a narrow three-lane road that has been reduced to a one-lane thoroughfare because vehicles are parked on both sides. A pedestrian's vehicle has only so much room for a few minutes to allow passengers to get on or off the jeepney.

Even if a driver wants to do the right thing and let passengers get on or off at the proper spot, he has no choice but to stop in the middle of the road as vehicles are parked everywhere so passers can have a side of the narrow street.

Barangay councils are among the most blatant "grabbers" of sidewalks. Many barangays build their community halls, guard houses and some other structures on sidewalks.

It is just a miracle that many pedestrians manage to dodge speeding vehicles despite having to walk in the middle of the street, instead of the sidewalks supposedly built for their convenience and, more importantly, safety.

Feedback

The inability of government officials to enforce discipline is a source of frustration for one concerned citizen.

"I have grown very tired of hearing local government heads, the MMDA, and even media reminding the public to obey traffic rules and regulations," said Mark Villar.

He noted that, in Manila, policemen/vehicles and those of the Traffic and Parking Bureau were the ones parked on pedestrian lanes and sidewalks. MMDA vehicles stopped right on pedestrian lanes while the traffic lights turned red. Drivers were allowed to stop their jeepneys on pedestrian lanes to allow passengers to get off or on.

Many government and police vehicles and patrol cars also did not have current stickers from the Land Transportation Office.

Meanwhile, Noreen S. Sun, reacting to last week's column about water pollution at the Quezon Memorial Circle, is asking the Quezon City government to also look into the problem of "souped up motorbikes sporting super decibel mufflers" that keep those awake in the "Scout" area.

I recommend that these nuisances are banned by Mayor Lito Atienza (Mr. Ay in Malate). It will help if Mayor [Feliciano] Belmonte of Quezon City will have the same initiative.

Send letters to The Consumer, Lifestyle Section, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 5th Floor, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Makati-Mandaluyong Bridge, Makati City; fax 897-8783/84; or e-mail lbolido@inquirer.com.ph.

GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPIN — BY JOJO ABERIA

PUGAD BABOY — BY PH. LINDO

DICK TRACY

LOVEANGTS — BY ELIZABETH CHICHOLI

JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY — BY STEPHEN PASILIAO

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

TULDOK — BY MARK COLL

BEN — BY DARREL SHELTON

KYOKO AND WOODY — BY LYRA GARCELLANO

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DAVAO

ARIES (March 21 to April 20): Do your best to be calm today because it's going to be easy to have some struggles with others especially female authority figures or just anyone. Don't jump into conclusions.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): A number of romantic conflicts could arise today. Don't overreact to others when you work constructive plans today. You should be in a relationship because you feel insecure or because you're afraid to be alone.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 21): Your relationships will generally be fulfilling at home is there with others today. Don't let financial concerns get you down.

CANCER (June 22 to July 22): Power struggles with family members, especially female relatives, are likely today. Consider this constructive criticism. Be more compassionate in how you speak. Therefore, don't wear pa-floss (floss the pasaan).

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Communications with others, especially siblings, will be positive today. Your Venus and Pluto are inclined to talk about other adult to do so how they feel. Don't be afraid to express.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Others appreciate or is impressed by you today. Don't be afraid to express something because you feel misunderstood. Be more open.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Avoid the urge to play games with others today. Be sincere in all of the following because you're not going to get away with it. Don't want to cause of an increasing tension, fulfilling an important relationship. Don't let failure in your ego. (You get the picture.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You feel restless today, as if something is nagging at you. Is there a problem you need to solve? Is there a project you need to finish? Basically, the Moon is at odds with your ruler, Pluto. Do not do anything that could be dangerous or life-threatening. Be careful when driving today. It's better to wait several days before approaching these ones!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Avoid power struggles with friends, especially those who don't want you to change your goals or objectives, don't do it—not today.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Romance can add a different dimension to your life today. Someone special definitely will notice you. And they're going to notice you more than the world in the above sense.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Discussions about politics, religion and racial issues are quite positive today because they'll be more emotionally loaded. Do try to.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Emotions around shared projects, loans, insurance matters and wills might take up your time today. It's better to wait several days before approaching these ones!

BIKO MACHINE — BY NIKKO ABERIA

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1. Commissioner
5. Ready to spend on some permanent
10. Unit of water
14. Fabric
15. Ice
16. Ark
17. Pass in
18. Hiccup
19. Traditional story
20. Elder and eldest
21. Answers to heavenly
22. Drink
24. Clammy
25. Perfect geometry
26. High ball from a caught
27. Religious man
28. Religious instrument
29. Multicolor article
30. "Twinkle, twinkle little ___"
31. Lotion
34. Promotion
35. Ice cream sandwiches
37. Salt-preserve
38. Common conversation
39. Ice cream cone
40. Baby animal
41. Problems of workers
42. Have a heavy expectancy
43. Lamborghini one
44. Mountain
51. Lofted
52. Computer's operation
53. Ice cream
54. Meet public with
55. Disagreement garnered
56. Ice cream
57. Ice cream daughter
58. Capital
59. Mr. Kennis operator
60. Ship
61. Ice cream operator

DOWN

1. Ice cream
2. Nature
3. Love, in Spain
4. Promotion
5. Silly sight
6. Sale demeanor
7. TV unit, once
8. Commissary
9. Product warranty
10. Bottle up
11. Lunch gathering
12. Prevention from
13. Delivery
14. Cow overdose
15. Ice cream
16. Ice cream
17. Ice cream
18. Ice cream
19. Ice cream
20. Ice cream
21. Ice cream
22. Ice cream
23. Ice cream
24. Ice cream
25. Ice cream
26. Ice cream
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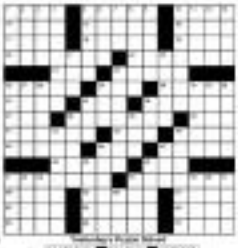
48. Ice cream
49. Ice cream
50. Ice cream



CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — By Dave Green

9	1						4	6
2		4				9		5
6			8	9	4			1
	9						8	
4			6		2			7
1								4
7			9	5	8			3
	3						1	
		9	3	1	6	7		

Difficulty Level: ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and program at www.SuDoKu.com

Answer to previous puzzle

7	8	3	1	2	4	9	6	5
4	5	1	9	6	8	7	2	3
6	2	9	5	7	3	8	4	1
9	3	7	2	5	6	4	1	8
2	4	5	8	1	7	6	3	9
8	1	6	3	4	9	2	5	7
1	9	8	4	3	2	5	7	6
3	6	2	7	8	5	1	9	4
5	7	4	6	9	1	3	8	2

ENTERTAINMENT

Edited by Rosemarie O. Yolanda

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Ambassador Jet Li

GENEVA— The World Health Organization has named Chinese action movie star Jet Li as a Goodwill Ambassador. The UN agency said Friday Li is "expected to use his... celebrity to raise attention on key health issues including public health responses to emergencies." AFP

CHEER FACTOR

Woody takes Manhattan yet again

LAS VEGAS— WOODY ALLEN is back on familiar ground with his latest movie, the first shot in his beloved New York City after four in Europe. In "Whatever Works," Allen has found a suitable counterpoint for his cynical humor in Larry David, star of "Curb Your Enthusiasm."

The Filer opens the Tribeca Film Festival on April 22 ahead of its theatrical debut on June.

Allen had shot most of his films in New York before doing three straight in London ("Match Point," "Scoop" and "Cassandra's Dream"). Here, making her son's "Ocky Cricket Bandstand" in Epstein with Sandra Johnstone.

Patricia Clarkson, who had a small role in "Vicky Cristina Barcelona" and takes on a key part in "Whatever Works," told the New York shoot was a pleasure—since she knew about sex.

"There were a couple of days I walked to work. It was beautiful. Where we were shooting in Boroughs, it was like shooting with Mick Jagger—the interviews were listed volunteers we went for lockstar and for Woody. In New York, the crowds gather, but I think because it's Woody, they're actually respectful." AP

From Baseco to HK

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

ACTRESS GINA PAREÑO IS SO stronger in the theme of Heroes composed in Port Area, Manila.

"Shooting there is hard, but I've gotten used to it," the bella beauty lip-synchronized. "It's either to sign me do it or go along with the rest, don't there."

She has worked in Heroes on three occasions, twice for the ABS-CBN drama anthology "Maalaala Mo Kaya," and for the opening scenes of the soap opera "Tayong Dalawa."

For her latest indie film, Ramon Jesse's "Bakal Boys," she resists Heroes and acts with actual slum dwellers—particularly real-life bakal boys or kids who drive for scrap metal in the Area ruins of the abandoned shipyard.

A show for veterans, Gina learns how to handle young, inexperienced co-stars like Jiro Villareal, Vincent Alano, Mikhas Bautista and Ryan Yabao who play the bakal boys.

"Kanyan they can be real-life hyperactive," she said. At she tol them with them for a heart-to-heart. "I told them that if they do well in the movie, they can become symbols of hope for Heroes."

"Bakal Boys" resembles her with deep, raw scenes the script for "Kalinaba," which won for her three international awards. She is no bit it off with producers Allen Quiambao and Monte Rodillo.

Still a thrill.

Gina has grown accustomed to globe-trotting for her indie movies. She was recently named Best Supporting Actress for Danny Zialcita's "Ang Babae sa Septic Tank" and Cannes Film Festival.

FROM C2

When stars become TV hosts

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THE WAY WHEN THERE were only a few hosts on TV, and they pretty much took care of hosting chores across the board. That's how Tambayan like Lolit Bonifat, Helen Vela, Tito Muñoz, Eddie Ilarde, Joe Marquez, Bert Marcelo, Dolor Monalisan, Jane Kelderley Glenn Henderson, Joey Luchkoski, Eddie Mercado, Sylvia La Torre, Marilou Pardo, Johnny Lyrian, Jose Mari Velez and Vic Pecio established themselves as leaders in the burgeoning field, going from one show to another while juggling said roadblocks.

Well, times were have changed. These days, there are scores and scores of program hosts on TV, and most of them didn't even make spelling for the job. Among some from the world of show biz, as stars or strikes.

Some of these hosts were well but most of them do work that hasn't made to be debated, not only because they lack the training and preparation for it... but, more significantly, because they haven't been able to make the key psychological shift required by their transformation from star to host.

And, what's that? Basically, some show biz stars don't make good hosts because celebrities need to focusing on themselves, while program hosts need to concentrate on their shows' guests or interviewees.

Some will absorbed star that it difficult to do that, or even when they're doing their hosting chores, they're forever relating to themselves, their thoughts, experiences, preferences, etc. They think that the audience those appear to be mostly and plugged-in, that what they don't know is, many viewers get tuned off by this, because the viewing public is interested in what's there's guests and interviewees have to say.

Some clear under bad interviewers because they really aren't all that interested in their guests. So, their questions are inter, predictable and lack the "follow-through" needed for interviewers to become truly interesting.

Worse, some star hosts rely on questions and quips thought up and written by somebody else. All the star hosts do is parrot the spirit all the "idiot boards."

All the time

You see that all the time on local TV's entertainment shows, with their teams of beautiful but clueless co-hosts rambling away in full shrill, froth and flail. Don't those "helpers" here know that they're doing badly? Well, duh, no. If ignorance is bliss, all of these telegenic space cousins must be in beautiful bliss to...

If some of them really want to do better as TV hosts, what can they do? First, learn that they have to think on their own, ad-lib, share spontaneous feelings and thoughts in a natural and involving manner, learn how to genuinely contribute without climbing, learn how to bring out the best in their guests, have an interest for what viewers want to know, etc.

In this job description is more difficult to communicate to TV stars, since should encourage them and give program hosting credit, both!

Having said that, we must observe that, more or less, new TV hosts are always needed, as our

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Robinsons Galleria
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Robinsons Cainta
Robinsons Antipolo
Robinsons Cabanatuan
Robinsons Iloilo
Robinsons Bacolod
Robinsons Cebu
Robinsons Pampanga
Robinsons Dumaguete
Robinsons General Santos
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Robinsons Tagbilaran
Robinsons Dagupan
Robinsons Calamba
Robinsons Tarlac
Robinsons Angeles
Robinsons Lucena
Robinsons Batangas
Robinsons Baguio
Robinsons Ormoc
Robinsons Olongapo
Robinsons Bicutan
Robinsons Trece Martires
Robinsons Palawan
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Kids get discounts at SM Cinemas upon purchase of Mister Donut Smidgets Super Box or dozen donuts!
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METRO MANILA

RESERVED SEATS NOW AVAILABLE

THE PODIUM

MONSTERS VS ALIENS

FAST & FURIOUS 4

LATE SCREENINGS

IMAX

MONSTERS VS ALIENS

SEA MONSTERS (3D)

CINEMA 1

MONSTERS VS ALIENS (3D)

RESERVED

LUZON

OPENING ON MAY 1

OPENING ON MAY 15

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At the Cinemas

Ayala Malls

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GREENBELT 1

GREENBELT 5

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

AYALA CENTER CEBU

MARKET!MARKET!

TRIHOMA

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Join us for a fun-filled Easter !!!

Enjoy exciting freebies when you watch at Glorietta 4 cinemas!

- Egg hunting*
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- Bread Hunter*
- Limited-time (ask 5:45 and None)*

(plus more exciting freebies)

At the Malls

GLORIETTA
Easter Sunday Event
April 12; Activity Center

GREENBELT
Arthur presents "Movieental by Arturo Lee"
February-June 30; Greenbelt Parks

ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Easter Sunday Activities
April 12; Town Plaza

AYALA CENTER CEBU
Easter Sunday Activities
April 12, 2-4pm; Cardinal Plaza

MARKET! MARKET!
Easter Egg variety
April 12, 2-4pm; Central Plaza (near Krispy Kreme)

BONIFACIO HIGH STREET
Easter Egg and Hunt
April 12, 2-4pm; Central Plaza (near Krispy Kreme)

TRIHOMA
Easter Fun Day of Fitness
April 12, 11am-5pm; Activity Center

ONESTAGE
Now accepting bookings for March to May 2009
For booking & requirements,
pls. call 752-7860 & 757-3861

Ayala Malls

Celebrate Easter and Meet Baby Looney Tunes
Babs Buds Bunny and Babs Lala Bunny!
April 12, 2009 | 11:30am to 12:30pm | Level 4 Cinema Lobby

Tri-Noma

glorietta | GREENBELT | TOWN | AYALA CENTER CEBU | MARKET! | Trinoma

The crosses celebrities bear

From page D4

Any the quiet widowhood of Good Friday and the festive food of Sunday.

He also noted the Lenten promotions on skips, the comercials, and on the Big screens, the movies most especially the Body Movie, that focused on the Passion of the Life and Death of Jesus Christ.

"Have come we've got him and lots of those London movies lately?" the reporter asked, noting that as a child he most violent at the spectacle that was "The Ten Commandments," "The Robe" and "King of Kings."

There's more to the Lenten season than just the hoopla it offers from the drudgery of day-to-day living. For him, it is being one with his family while taking time out to appreciate the forest that needs him.

E-mail: [illegible]

When...

From page D1

networks should keep training new hosts who are ready to replace them unless when they feel that it's time for them to ramble off into oaks.

'Pink Panther 2'

In the sequel to the 2006 comedy Steve Martin returns as French Inspector Jacques Clouseau, perhaps the most bumbling police detective in cinematic history. This time around, he's out to hunt a thief who is stealing all of the great artifacts of the world, including the Pink Panther diamond.

'Living with the Wolfman'

Beginning April 6, Animal Planet rebrands its zoo under "Living with the Wolfman," every Monday at 10 p.m. The series focuses on British wolf expert Shane H. Ik, who has been living with wolves at the Grizzly Wolfie Wildlife Park in Devon, England, successfully cultivating the pack and becoming its [illegible].

From...

From page D1

dcast's "Idols" at the Ird Annu. This Awards, held in Hong Kong, and dubbed the region's Grammy.

Although she insists that she's "overjoyed" Cher admits that this latest trophy still gave her quite a thrill. "May Idol ya re: (I still get tickled pink)."

CINEMA ACCESS: 395-5555

MOVIEWORLD

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GALLERIA

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PIONEER

1 MONSTERS vs. ALIENS
2 KNOWING
3 FAST and FURIOUS 4
4 FRIDAY the 13TH Sneak Preview

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STA. ROSA

1 SUNDO
2 KNOWING
3 STREETFIGHTER
4 MONSTERS vs. ALIENS

LIPA

1 MONSTERS vs. ALIENS
2 SUNDO
3 THE UNBORN
4 STREETFIGHTER

DASMARIÑAS

1 FAST and FURIOUS 4
2 KNOWING
3 THE UNBORN
4 FRIDAY the 13TH Sneak Preview

IMUS

1 FAST and FURIOUS 4
2 KNOWING
3 THE UNBORN
4 FRIDAY the 13TH Sneak Preview

ANGELES

1 FAST and FURIOUS 4
2 SUNDO
3 KNOWING
4 MONSTERS vs. ALIENS

STARMILLS

1 KNOWING
2 FAST and FURIOUS 4
3 THE SECRET of MOONACRE
4 MONSTERS vs. ALIENS
5 SUNDO
6 THE UNBORN

BACOLOD

1 RACE to WITCH MOUNTAIN / SUNDO
2 KNOWING
3 THE UNBORN
4 MONSTERS vs. ALIENS
5 PAGANG KRUS
6 TAKEN

ILOILO

1 THE SECRET of MOONACRE
2 KNOWING
3 GRAN TORINO / SUNDO
4 MONSTERS vs. ALIENS
5 PAGANG KRUS
6 TAKEN

The crosses celebrities bear

SHANG CINEPLEX

1) FAST & THE FURIOUS R-13 12:00, 2:40, 5:00, 7:10, 10:00
2) MONSTERS vs ALIENS GP 12:00, 2:40, 5:00, 7:10, 9:30
3) FAST & THE FURIOUS R-13 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30
4) KNOWING PG-13 1:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:40

FAST & THE FURIOUS R-13 1:30, 4:00 FRIDAY FOR VIPS R-13 7:00, 9:30

Buy your tickets NOW! Pacquiao vs. Hatton May 2, 2009

Shangri-La Plaza

SINCE IT'S HOLY WEDNESDAY, let's veer away from the usual confessions. Beneath the glitz of the biz, celebs have had their share of "Kalbaryo," too. May the true significance of Lent help us bear all our heavy crosses.

OGIE ALCASID: "My worst hellbent was when I had to hide my relationship with **Regine**. I had to wait for the right time to face the music. I was able to go through it because of my belief that before God can heal our wounds, we should also try to cleanse ourselves."

JESSICA SOHO-HAMBAO: "The hardest time I had in my life was when I was suffering from bouts of anxiety, confusion and depression. When I entered into a personal relationship with Christ, I eventually experienced healing and found more joy, peace and love."

MARVIN AGUSTIN: "The toughest years I endured was when my dad was still in prison. I survived through fervent prayers and with our family standing by each other. That was all more or so eager as a clan."

ESTHER DUMPO: "When my dad passed away, I nearly thought hell. I was then between continuing my studies and working to for the 'pasalubong.' Perseverance, strong faith and determination helped me surpass all the obstacles."

DAMIEN KUNZ: "It was a living nightmare when my mom was confined in the hospital for her kidney problem. It was a close call. I really thought I was gonna lose her already. Thank God for His mercies, my mom is alive and well!"

CHRISTIAN BAUTISTA: "I was devastated when my grandfather passed away. I got by with the prayers of friends, love of family and peace from God."

RENZ PUNO: "The biggest hellbent I had was during my college years. I had four projects a day weekly, that for UP, one for PBL, one for the submission of term plus weight training. And in between, I had to attend school. That room on for three years. Pahapot sind hellbent for when I joined the PBA because I only played for one years like become under for me and I had more time for myself and my friends."

BAYANI AGBAYANI: "Hindi naranasan" na pagsubok ko yung time ng daughter **Rosalinda**, who was then 2, wounded blood. It was torture waiting for the doctor's diagnosis. I kept praying in the chapel of the hospital where she was confined."

Holy Week break

Sen. Chiz Escudero said he is looking forward to taking a short break from his hectic schedule this coming Holy Week.

The senator has wife **Christine**, along with their twins will spend time together somewhere in the south, "away from politics."

"It will be the second time for the senator and Cht like us to be together," he said, adding that there's the second Christmas.

He noted though that while the twins were still too young to be conscious of the Christian tradition of Lent or its cultural significance, he hopes they would have a sense of what it was all about.

"Having my kids around has made me particularly conscious of their growing up and learning about them being distinctly Filipino," he said.

He remembered his class getting together for Holy Week and observing the rituals of the Lenten season back in Ateneo, which included the pabasa in the neighborhood, the stations of the cross in church, the Visita Iglesia on Maundy Thurs-

#1 MOVIE IN AMERICA

FACT: Major catastrophes are happening everyday around the world killing millions.

THERE MUST BE A REASON

KNOWING

2ND WEEK

POWER PLANT CINEMA

FRIDAY THE 13TH -R18	MONSTERS VS. ALIENS -GP 12:10, 2:10, 4:10, 6:10, 8:10, 10:10	FAST & FURIOUS 4 -R13 12:30, 2:40, 4:50, 7:40, 10:10
KNOWING - PG13 12:00, 2:00, 4:10, 7:50, 10:30	ACE VENTURA - GP 1:40, 3:50, 8:00, 8:10	FAST & FURIOUS 4 -R13 12:40, 2:10, 5:40, 8:10, 10:40

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Experience 5 fantastic "worlds" all in one day, in one place... Eastwood City!

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

KNOWING - PG 13	THE FAST & THE FURIOUS 4 - R 13	MONSTERS VS. ALIENS - GP
ACE VENTURA - GP	THE FAST & THE FURIOUS 4 - R 13	MONSTERS VS. ALIENS - GP

ULTRA CINEMA 7 THE FAST & THE FURIOUS 4 - R 13